

# Braille Monitor



OCTOBER, 1975

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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# THE BRAILLE MONITOR

*A Publication of the*  
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SPEAKING FOR THE BLIND—IT IS THE BLIND SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES.



## THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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\* \* \*

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR  
OCTOBER 1975

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## AN HONOR AND OPPORTUNITY: THE ORGANIZED BLIND MOVEMENT MAKES HISTORY

High up on the balcony, technicians scurried about making last minute checks on the radio hook-up while a CBS Television News crew busied themselves setting up the cameras on risers and checking sound levels.

The audience was seated and the waiters moved quickly to serve lunch.

It was the Wednesday, July 23rd, Headliners Luncheon in the prestigious and august ballroom of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

But today's luncheon was special. The National Press Club has many times served as stage for the performers who make American History. And as the Press Club President, Bill Broom, led the headtable guests to their seats on the Dais, the National Press Club again hosted history.

The honored guest was Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President of the National Federation of the Blind. It is a long way from the sheltered shops to the prestige of the National Press Club, just as it has been a long way for the blind to track NAC across the continent, but the blind, standing together, had lifted the movement one more dramatic step higher as our President came to the podium to tell those assembled about "The Blind—A Minority Without Press" and to express to the Nation listening over National Public Radio, our views. In one of the most powerful forums in the Nation, the blind were speaking for themselves through their own elected leader.

The occasion was appropriately punctuated by the other notable guests on the Dais.

First, of course, was our first-lady, Anna Kathrine Jernigan. There was Stanley Thomas, the Federal Department of HEW's Assistant Secretary for Human Development. And most notably, there was Mrs. Mary Louise Smith, Chairwoman of the Republican National Committee.

The message was clear and succinct and delivered with the Jernigan Touch of Eloquence to which Federationists have become accustomed and which has proven so persuasive with the public.

Dr. Jernigan told a National Press Club luncheon that the blind need a changing press to help end custodial and second-class treatment of the blind.

"But we are organized, and we are on the move. We want no strife or confrontation, but we will do what we have to do. We are simply no longer willing to be second-class citizens. They tell us that there is no discrimination—that the blind are not a minority. But we know who we are, and we will never go back."

"We are willing to work, and work hard; but we also dare to dream—and in our work and our dreams we ask for your help and your understanding. We have the faith to believe that, when you know who we are, you will give us both."

Dr. Jernigan charged that the news media had traditionally treated the blind with the same attitude as the general public.

He cited instances of reporters covering annual Conventions of the National

Federation of the Blind, where the blind were dealing with major issues such as discrimination in employment, housing, and transportation. The reporters only wanted to cover the aid and appliance displays.

Dr. Jernigan also cited an historic occasion in Chicago in June of 1973 when the first demonstration of hundreds of blind persons from throughout the country took place to protest a meeting of the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Instead of covering the demonstration, the *Chicago Tribune* chose instead to run two articles dealing with blindness. "Busy blind man finds time to help children." and "Blind, he directs music in city school."

"What would have happened if Martin Luther King had been leading the first black demonstrations in Chicago and the papers had ignored it—printing, instead, 'Busy black man finds time to help children.' and 'Black, he directs music in city school.'" Dr. Jernigan questioned.

"What I have said must be seen in perspective," he said. "The *Tribune* writers and other members of the Chicago press were not trying to put us down or conspire against us. They were calling it as they saw it, writing what tradition had taught them to write."

A month later in New York more than two thousand blind people, the largest group of the blind ever assembled, marched to NAC's headquarters. Dr. Jernigan continued.

"Nationally there was only a ripple," he said. "I can only explain it as before."

Dr. Jernigan also cited the entertainment industry, singling out the negative image of blindness portrayed by the well-known cartoon character, Mr. Magoo.

In conclusion Dr. Jernigan said that conditions are changing.

"The sound in the land is the march of the blind to freedom, but there are also joy and promise. Change is apparent in every segment of society—nowhere more than in the press."

There were close to one hundred persons in the audience, including RSA Commissioner Dr. Adams, Congressmen, Congressional representatives, Federal judges, the press, and Federationists, a very good turnout, according to the Club's President.

And then the audience sent up written questions as the Nation listened in. Dr. Jernigan told about NAC and the struggle of the blind to have representation or see NAC go. He talked of the FAA and the inherent ability of the blind to fend for themselves if only the opportunity would be given.

For one hour, the luncheon audience and the Nation, heard the story of the Organized Blind Movement.

The broadcast by National Public Radio was itself an historic occasion.

The NPR had given a commitment to carry the speech several weeks before time, but as the date approached, NPR officials changed their minds. During the weekend preceding the Press Club Luncheon, the call went out to Federationists throughout the country urging them to call their local NPR stations and ask them to ask that the speech be carried. And call they did.

By early Tuesday morning, NPR officials seemed annoyed with the whole business, but by mid-day they were convinced. They indicated that they had received more phone calls and telegrams about the Press Club Luncheon than NPR had ever received since its beginning, on any issue. The blind had shown once more what collective action on the barricades can do.

It was a busy week. Dr. Jernigan had arrived in Washington on Monday afternoon and immediately began meeting with Federal officials and making other media appearances.

History was made when he was interviewed by Voice of America and the message of the Organized Blind went out across the continents.

He was also interviewed for "All Things Considered," a news show on National Public Radio.

On Tuesday evening, a large group of area Federationists, from the District, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, gathered to talk with Dr. Jernigan.

He spoke of the momentum the movement had picked up. He pointed to

the July 10 *Wall Street Journal* article, pending coverage on CBS, our new film, "The Blind An Emerging Minority," and our Public Service successes on TV and radio, and now in the magazines. But he cautioned the Federationists that we must maintain the momentum.

The momentum will be maintained. Before the meeting ended, a committee was formed of area chapter and state presidents, with the D.C. affiliate president, Joie Stuart, serving as chairperson, to organize a large number of area Federationists to call on the Federal Aviation Administration within several weeks to demand the removal of all restrictive or confusing policies which have caused problems for blind persons wanting to fly on commercial air carriers.

A similar plan will be considered to deal with the demand that the National Labor Relations Board take jurisdiction over sheltered shops.

It had been a hectic three days, but most importantly, it had been an historic three days. It seemed somehow to underscore Dr. Jernigan's declaration to the Press Club luncheon that we would never go back. □

## NEW CRUSADERS

BY

JEFFREY A. TANNENBAUM

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Keith and Elizabeth Howard were all set to board an Allegheny Airlines flight from Washington, D.C., to Philadelphia. The airplane wasn't fully booked. Yet an airline official suddenly insisted they must take separate flights.

The reason: The Howards are both blind.

The couple say they were told the pilot didn't want more than one blind passenger on the flight because he assumed that blind people might cause a safety problem or require extra service. While his wife went on ahead, the forty-three-year-old Mr. Howard waited for the next flight.

Far from being a helpless nuisance, the Howards both successfully manage their own lunch counters in Washington. They angrily protested to Allegheny, which confirms their story. Allegheny apologized, and says that Ransome Airlines, which operated the flight under contract, has changed its policies to prevent a repeat of the incident. But the Howards figure their problems are far from over. They say the airline incident was typical of the "common discrimination—a normal thing" that society practices almost routinely against the blind.

But nowadays, blind people like the Howards are moving with increasing fervor to protest such discrimination. They are voicing complaints, turning to the courts, and even staging strikes and demonstrations. As a result, employers, landlords, and busi-

nesses generally are finding they must either change their policies or face protests and lawsuits.

#### "A Dash of Leprosy"

"Society will give charity to the blind, but it won't allow us to be first-class citizens," charges Ralph W. Sanders, president of the Arkansas unit of the National Federation of the Blind. "Like the blacks, we've come to the point where we're not going to stand for it anymore," he adds.

Ironically, this militancy occurs at a time when conditions for the blind are improving significantly, particularly in the realm of jobs. Several states in recent years have greatly improved and broadened training programs for the blind, and growing numbers of opportunities are opening in skilled fields like teaching, computer programming, and the law.

But expectations are also rising. Thus, the blind today demand equal opportunity in jobs, housing, insurance, adoption of children, and numerous other fields. Increasingly, they also rebel against the paradoxical mixture of excessive pity for the blind and mindless discrimination against them that some feel pervades society. They say blindness is only the beginning of a blind person's problems.

"The hardest thing about being blind is the stigma that society attaches to it," says Edwin R. Lewinson, a blind professor of

American history at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. "Traditionally, blind people have been regarded as being physically helpless and mentally retarded, with a dash of leprosy thrown in," he adds. Professor Lewinson says a New York bartender refused to serve him because he assumed that a blind person can't take care of himself unless he is stone sober.

### The Nonmilitants

Until recently, the blind themselves rarely protested—and, indeed, thousands of blind people are still far from militant. According to the American Foundation for the Blind, about 1.7 million Americans have "severely impaired vision," including 400,000 with "no usable vision at all." But of the severely impaired, two-thirds are over sixty-five years old. These elderly people, as well as many younger blind people, for the most part are little inclined to protest.

Still, the ranks of the militants are growing. Until this year, some states didn't even have chapters of the National Federation of the Blind. But the organization, which says its membership has grown to 50,000 from 40,000 five years ago, even organizes public demonstrations these days.

In the last few years, hundreds of blind people have attended demonstrations the Federation has organized in New York, Chicago, Washington, and Cincinnati to demand better treatment. "The blind are an emerging minority," says Kenneth Jernigan, President of the Federation, which is based in Des Moines.

The impact of this minority's new militancy is showing up in all kinds of places. Marc N. Raker, a blind twenty-four-year-old communications student at Temple

University in Philadelphia, recently complained to the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission that a computer dating service had rejected him and returned his \$10 fee. He says the Philadelphia franchise of Selectra-Date Corporation told him: "We're not going to inflict blindness on our clients."

### Unfair at the Fair?

Robert Friedman, president of Selectra-Date, says in New York: "We merely reflect the mores of our customers. Blind dates—no pun intended—is not what they're looking for." But Mr. Friedman says the service has now decided to process Mr. Raker's application rather than face a possible court action. The sighted client who gets what Mr. Friedman terms a "blind date" will probably "scream for her money back," he says.

Walter M. Weber, a thirty-four-year-old Internal Revenue Service representative in Richmond, Virginia, recently complained to the Virginia attorney general that he was barred from the "Sky Glider" at the State fair. The Sky Glider is a slow-moving device resembling a ski lift that transported people around the fairgrounds. At the time of the incident, Mr. Weber was with his sighted wife.

The State attorney general last May issued an opinion that the blind "may not lawfully be prohibited from access to rides" that are open to the public.

More commonly, the blind are suing employers. For instance, Judith A. Miller, a twenty-eight-year-old University of Colorado graduate with a state teaching certificate, complained in a Denver Federal-court lawsuit that the Denver public schools refused to hire her because she is blind. She

had already taught two years at an elementary school in the Denver suburb of Walnut Hills, and David H. Mathias, her principal there, strongly attests to her abilities. The suit was settled through a consent order in which the Denver school district, without admitting to any discriminatory practices, affirmed that blind applicants will be considered equally with the sighted. Miss Miller says she plans to try again for a post.

Many employers, of course, simply don't believe blind people can perform certain jobs, and sometimes they are right. But the blind argue that past experience often proves the skeptics wrong. "There are alternative techniques I can use to accomplish the same things as my sighted co-workers," says Miss Miller, the Colorado teacher. While she obviously can't see if a child is misbehaving she says: "Most problems are audible enough that you know they are there." To make sure students pay attention, she calls on each one frequently to answer questions.

Miss Miller says she either obtains a volunteer to grade papers or pays an assistant \$50 to \$75 a month from her own salary to do the job. She also arranges to have her textbooks transcribed into Braille, a task which many volunteers perform for the blind.

#### Dogs an Excuse?

Housing is another area that has sparked discrimination complaints. In Philadelphia, blind sculptor Henry T. Mitchell, Jr., complained to the Pennsylvania Human Rights Commission that he was denied an apartment because the landlord wouldn't waive a rule against dogs to permit a guide dog. The commission ordered the landlord, Donato DeVitis, to offer Mr. Mitchell an apartment and to pay him \$1,584, mainly as compensation for "mental anguish."

According to Mr. DeVitis's lawyer, the landlord plans to comply with the decision if the commission's powers, currently under challenge in another dispute, are upheld in court. The lawyer, Fronefield Crawford, Sr., also says that Mr. DeVitis is interested in keeping out dogs rather than blind people. Blind activists claim this is a switch from the usual landlord attitude. They charge that many landlords think sightless tenants are more likely than others to set fires, fall down stairs, or suffer other accidents. Thus, the blind say, there are many landlords who are willing to permit dogs but who ban blind people.

The insurance industry is also hearing from the blind. Following complaints from the blind, the Iowa State Insurance Department recently surveyed major insurers concerning discrimination. It found that most underwriters surveyed assume the blind are worse risks than the sighted and refuse to provide double-indemnity accident coverage and certain other types of coverage for blind clients. The insurers "don't really have much data to justify this," says William H. Huff, State Insurance Commissioner. He says he tentatively views the discrimination as "an unfair trade practice" that invites a cease-and-desist order and that he plans a public hearing on the subject.

#### Battling Adoption Agencies

The Institute of Life Insurance, an industry group, concedes that many insurers don't write some kinds of policies for the blind. But it says the coverage is "readily available" to the blind through other insurers.

In addition to insurers and other private companies, many government and social agencies are drawing fire from the blind.

For instance, some blind couples are fighting local agency practices that deny the blind a chance to adopt children.

Perhaps most surprisingly, blind people are increasingly protesting the social agencies created specifically to serve them. A common complaint is that the blind themselves often have little control over how the agencies function. A group of blind people has filed suit in a Minnesota State court to force the Minneapolis Society for the Blind to elect a majority of blind members to its board. The Society, which disburses about \$1.3 million a year for vocational training and other services, concedes that its twenty-three-member board has only six sightless members.

Regardless of intentions, some agencies

tend to keep the blind locked into their traditional rut of menial jobs, militants contend. On top of this, the agencies sometimes hire sighted workers for the same jobs—at higher pay. Earlier this year, the state-operated Kansas Industries for the Blind paid its mattress stuffers \$2.10 an hour if they were sighted, but only \$1.63 an hour if they were blind. (Many jobs with such organizations are exempt from minimum-wage laws because they aren't considered competitive employment.) Among other things, Kansas Industries argued that its blind workers often received Social Security benefits and thus weren't always fully dependent on wages. But after the blind workers staged a two-week work stoppage and public picketing, Kansas Industries agreed to change the pay system. □

#### WITH MY EYES WIDE OPEN

BY

WILLIAM F. RYAN

[Reprinted from *The Rosslyn (Virginia) Review*, July 31, 1975. ©1975 by William F. Ryan.]

Funny how it all gets turned around when you get a line on something that needs reporting and isn't going to get it, or much of it, and you decide for yourself to land a lamp on Dover Beach. Last week I got calls from Chicago and Washington. Their reps' wanted coverage of a National Press Club speech by the president of their organization—the National Federation of the Blind. The speaker, Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, social scientist, educator, and author, was slotted to address the networks and national papers on "The Blind—A Minority Without Press." The time was Wednesday, July 23, 12:30 p.m.—an item I'd have to stuff down in a lunch hour, pay for out of pocket and expect little remuneration. But there were reasons to go—maybe the wrong ones.

It came back as an undergrad I had read American Literature assignments to a blind guy and so befriended him that I even helped him put together an application to law school north of here. He was accepted. Maybe it was my fault that we fell out of touch and I wouldn't accept even a nominal fee from him, or maybe it was because I wouldn't stand the pranks and the cracks anymore about being the bleeding heart of the world. Then there was the business of my late friend, William J. Fielding, one-time author of such best-sellers of the 1920's as *The Careman Within Us* and *Love and the Sex Emotions* while editing, from Newark, a Socialist newspaper and the landmark magazine for Haldeman-Julius, *Know Thyself*. When I met Bill Fielding in

1972 he was deaf. When he died in December 1973 at 86, he was blind too, and major magazines like *Esquire* were turning down his sharp copy on the pros of socialized medicine and the atrocious shortcomings of Medicare.

In short, I could hear the eternal footman take my coat and snicker, and in short, I was afraid. What I'm saying is that I went to hear Dr. Jernigan for the wrong reasons.

When I got to the Press Club that hot afternoon, I sat a long time by myself and put away a liquid lunch from the cash bar, watching dozens of sightless people enter the lounge, only to have brainless boobs in double-knit jackets coast them to chairs like so many morons and paraplegics. Knowing I'd be somehow surprised by the whole affair I tried to keep out of it. Embarrassment is hard to take, particularly when you're embarrassed in front of people who know your face is red even if they can't see it.

Maybe half of the attendees were black. Three of them joined me at a low lounge table closely rimmed by leather chairs. They knew I sat there alone, silently. They smoked, lighting their own cigarettes; they went to the bar for their own drinks; when they addressed me or one another they looked straight at the listener with closed or blank eyes. What is a handicap, anyway?

Surely the biggest surprise was Dr. Kenneth Jernigan himself. He teaches English, writes articles, gives talks, and travels all over the country from his Des Moines, Iowa, home, in behalf of his organization. He's a well-turned-out, handsome man with a voice tailor-made for narrating documentary films or giving sparkle to dull but optimistic radio messages. He is also quite blind.

"Our problem," he said, "is so different from what most people imagine, that it is hard for them even to comprehend its existence. It is not the blindness, nor is it that we have lacked sympathy or good will or widespread charity and kindness. We have had plenty of that—too much, in fact. Rather, it is that we have not (in present-day parlance) been perceived as a minority. Yet, that is exactly what we are—a minority, with all that the term implies."

Jernigan spent a lot of time demonstrating how the press is no better at perceiving the real needs of sightless people than the general public. He told how a black reporter, sent to cover the Federation's annual Convention in Chicago in 1972, concerned himself more with the various mechanical aids and gadgets for the blind than the real aims of the people—equal justice and treatment under law, discrimination in employment, housing, and education. Jernigan gave other instances where much the same has been the upshot of press coverage on the blind and efforts to better themselves—socially.

"Now, what I have said must be seen in perspective," Dr. Jernigan said. "The *Tribune* writers and other members of the Chicago press were not trying to put us down or conspire against us. They were calling it as they saw it, writing what tradition had taught them to write. Like any other cross-section of society, they doubtless were (and are) people of integrity and good will. It was not a matter of morals or motives, but of comprehension. It was all tied up with their notions about blindness. Pathos, compensatory talents, musical ability, inspiration, bravery against odds, world of darkness, heartrending tragedy—these they (and even their editors) could understand: run-of-the-mill, good human

interest, no sweat. But the blind as a minority? Discrimination? Marches? Confrontation with the social service agencies, the very people who were trying to help the blind? Ridiculous! The reporters couldn't understand it, and (at least, at the emotional level) they didn't believe it. So how could they write it? And even if they did, how could their editors approve it, or the public buy it? Forget it. Don't think about it. Let it alone."

The National Federation of the Blind, founded in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in 1940, is a growing organization that serves as an alternative to what Dr. Jernigan sees as the odious pseudo-services offered the sightless by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC). When asked about NAC, Dr. Jernigan described it as having been founded in Europe "for the social service establishment. Reactionary people are on the board," he said. "The Federation people want to bring this story out. NAC wants the right to exclude accreditation to any agency serving the blind. Their claim that they cover all services is untrue. They don't contribute quality services." For Jernigan and his Federation, custodial and second-class treatment of the blind does not qualify.

Can the blind militate as a minority? Well, Jernigan puts it this way: "Fifty years

ago it was the blacks. Today it is the blind. But we are organized, and we are on the move. We want no strife or confrontation, but we will do what we have to do, make no mistake about it. We are simply no longer willing to be second-class citizens. They tell us there is no discrimination—that the blind are not a minority. But we know who we are, and we will never go back."

What can HEW do, someone asked Jernigan. There is his answer: (1) Through the Rehabilitation Act, HEW can help to enforce provisions that no person can discriminate, particularly on contract work. (2) The agency can "implement laws imaginatively."

What can the media do? "The press is not more benighted than other segments of society, but not *less* benighted," Jernigan said. "Don't commit the sins of your fathers. Learn the facts about blindness, and don't tolerate cases of invidious discrimination."

Kenneth Jernigan's answers to questions were even more robust than his speech, and the latter was no less than a gadfly. It may have served to enlighten others, as well as me, about one's own mindset; probably a more functional fact than a lecture on blindness. Another sighted person in the audience sent up a card to the lectern: "I am not trying to be facetious—I want you to know your talk has opened my eyes." □

## NATIONAL PUBLICITY FOR NFB

With full-page ads in leading magazines appearing during July and August, our President's appearances during July, our spots on radio and television, and news-stories by nationally known reporters and commentators, the public in the United States will soon begin to recognize the blind as an *emerged* minority.

Dr. Jernigan appeared, as most of you know, at the National Press Club. His address to that prestigious group has been printed in the equally prestigious *Vital Speeches* for August 15, 1975. The spin-off from that speech, the "Tomorrow Show," and various radio interviews, including one for international broadcast on "Voice of America," has already had positive results for all blind people; for example, the passage by the Louisiana Legislature of their white cane law after hearing our President.

A full-page advertisement about the Federation appeared in the July or August issues of *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *Newsweek*, and *Sports Illustrated*, provided to the NFB without charge. Our energetic Public Relations Committee, led by its chairman, Ralph Sanders, is certainly setting a pace that the state affiliates are going to be hard pressed to copy. The blind of the Nation will benefit along with the members of the National Federation from their efforts and the expected results of such a very affirmative approach to solving our problems.

Received just before going to press, the following letter from Congressman James A. Burke adds to the list.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Washington, D.C., July 31, 1975.*

Dr. KENNETH JERNIGAN,  
*Iowa Commission for the Blind,*  
*Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR DR. JERNIGAN: I am very happy to forward to you under separate cover a number of copies of the July 28th *Congressional Record*; on page H-7706 you will find the transcript of the speech that you presented to the Headliner's Luncheon at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

Your speech offered many interesting and provocative insights into an area of unpublicized discrimination against the blind, of which most Americans are sadly unaware. It is time that the discriminations, misconceptions, and stereotypes that surround the blind individual's life are given the needed publicity that will hopefully bring about the eradication of these injustices.

It was, indeed, a pleasure to include your speech in the *Congressional Record* for the benefit and enlightenment of all my fellow colleagues in the House of Representatives.

With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

JAMES A. BURKE,  
*Member of Congress.* □

## BLINDNESS: LET THE WORD GO OUT

BY

KENNETH JERNIGAN

PRESIDENT, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND  
AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE  
WORLD CONGRESS OF THE JEWISH BLIND  
*Jerusalem, August 1975*

The honor which you have accorded me (and more importantly the movement I represent) by your invitation to address this historic Conference is one for which I have the deepest appreciation; and I wish with all my heart that I might be with you in person to share the inspiration and the wisdom which these deliberations will surely produce. It may sound intolerably trite, but it is the simple truth, that I am with you in spirit as you assemble in the ancient homeland of human liberty to examine, extol, and extend the liberties of an embattled human minority.

And if I cannot be present myself, I know of no person better qualified to pass my message to you than my long-time friend and courageous comrade in the world movement of the blind, Dr. Jacob Freid. His own remarkable organization, the Jewish Braille Institute of America, represents what a service agency for the blind should be and rarely is: an ally and advocate, rather than a custodian and captor.

The civilization of the West of which we are all the heirs has two essential wellsprings: one which flows from Athens and the other from Jerusalem. The two are as reciprocal and complementary as the hemispheres of the brain, or as the head and the heart. Each represents an affirmation of humanism in its own way—the one primarily secular and rational in its accent, the other deeply spiritual and compassionate. If the

Socratic dialogue resonates throughout our ancestral culture, it is equally true that all of Western history speaks with a Jewish accent.

That accent is on freedom—as the goal of history and the birthright of humanity. No other tradition has been more responsive than that of Judaism to the claims of the spirit; no other nation has been more attentive than the State of Israel to the cries of the oppressed. It is fitting then that the problems of blind people should be under consideration here, in this venerable seat of resistance and resilience; for we the blind are now as we have always been the victims of history and the prisoners of culture, yet we are undefeated; and here of all places our condition and our cause may expect to gain recognition and understanding.

Let me tell you a tale of a people who have wandered immemorially across the face of earth; outcasts at worst and second-class citizens at best; the targets of prejudice and the objects of discrimination; often persecuted and everywhere segregated into a ghetto of almshouses and sheltered workplaces; a people held down and kept out, regarded as inferior and contaminated, yet proud in adversity and tenacious at survival; a people who have carved out a collective identity through mutual struggle and self-organization, against hostility and even oppression by powerful adversaries. In their new identity and solidarity, this people

have grown strong: they have liberated themselves from institutional bondage and declared their independence. They have tasted freedom: they have found their voice: they have learned their strength; they have seized their opportunity; and, yes, they have shown their power.

They—or rather, I should say, *we*—are the blind. More accurately, we are the vanguard of the blind. We are an organized movement, born in the grass roots and spreading like wildfire, mobilized in a common cause, transforming ourselves from immobile objects into an irresistible force.

We are national in our origins but international in our reach. Our roots are ancient and scattered—there were blind brotherhoods in Europe five hundred years ago, and organizations of blind beggars in China a thousand years ago; but our modern history dates from the present century, with the establishment of national federations and associations in several countries. One of these in particular—the National Federation of the Blind of the United States of America—may stand as a symbol because it has been the forerunner and instigator of the International Federation of the Blind.

The NFB-USA was organized in 1940 by Dr. Jacobus tenBroek, a blind legal scholar from California who gathered around him a handful of fellow-conspirators—“a little band of willful men”—from only seven states. They organized in collective self-defense—at a time when new and powerful service agencies, public and private, national and local, were spreading over the American blind a blanket of custodialism which was felt more and more as a straitjacket. Conspicuous among these overbearing forces was the Federal Social Security Agency,

which administered the new programs of welfare spawned by the great depression of the thirties. Progressive and benevolent as they were, these programs were perceived by the pioneer leaders of the blind as a gilded cage—designed to help people in distress but not to help them out of it. In fact they were the modern equivalent of the Elizabethan Poor Laws, perpetuating poverty (through the means test or pauper's oath) and reinforcing dependency. They created a “blindness system” under a “poorhouse state”—a bureaucratic maze from which there was no exit. The outcry of the blind, as we found our voice, became: “Stop the system—we want to get off.”

The effort to get off the welfare rolls—to exchange relief for rehabilitation, charity for opportunity, segregation for participation—constituted the main thrust of the organized blind movement in America during the forties and fifties. But there was also a deeper need and a farther vision: to erase the mistaken identity which had isolated and immobilized the blind in all times and places—the image of blindness as helplessness and even witlessness, of the blind person as totally incapacitated rather than physically inconvenienced. Underlying the reform of institution there must also be a revolution of impressions. And, like most revolutions, this one began at home—as a “revolution of self.” To convince others of our normality, our equality, and our capability, we the blind had first to convince ourselves. The organized blind movement was primarily a demonstration that the blind could lead the blind; secondarily it was a demonstration that the blind (at least, with respect to their needs and aspirations) could guide society. In the first of these purposes the Federation has clearly succeeded; in the second purpose it is on the road to success.

But the revolution has not been easy, nor even nonviolent. Our very attempt to organize, as an independent self-directing body, was initially opposed at every turn. The agencies and foundations who held stewardship over their hapless wards—whose services penetrated the life of the blind person from cradle to grave, from workbench to family hearth—viewed the Federation as a mutinous uprising of ingrates and outcasts fomented by agitators of doubtless foreign extraction. It was argued then (and it is sometimes argued still) that self-organization by the blind would raise false hopes of self-sufficiency and impossible dreams of self-determination; that such organization was unnecessary because the blind were already assembled under the wing of the mother agencies; that Federationism was an evil scheme because it could only reinforce the distinction between the blind and the nonblind (although that distinction was the sole reason-for-being of the agencies themselves); that most blind people did not wish to be organized but only to be left alone (alone, that is, with the caseworker, the counselor, the custodian, and the caretaker); and that our movement was not really genuine anyway but a bid for power on the part of unscrupulous opportunists (a suspicion that was almost a half-truth since it was the total power of agency rule which was in fact being challenged).

Nevertheless our movement flourished; the ranks of the Federation grew by leaps and bounds (from the hundreds to the tens of thousands and ultimately to its present size), and the voice of Federationism was soon heard across the land (from a handful of state affiliates to more than half the states organized within a decade, and now to all of the fifty states and the District of Columbia). As the movement of the blind

grew and solidified, so the opposition grew and hardened; sheltered shopworkers and vending-stand operators, dependent on agency supervision, were threatened if they looked toward the Federation and fired if they joined it. The struggle reached a climax in the mid-fifties, when Dr. Jacobus tenBroek declared war in ringing tones:

"The National Federation of the Blind," he said, "stands today an embattled organization. Our motives have been impugned; our purposes reviled; our integrity aspersed; our representative character denied. Plans have been laid, activities undertaken, and concerted actions set in motion for the clear and unmistakable purpose of bringing about our destruction. Nothing less is sought than our extinction as an organization. . . . If the course of events is not altered, if these agencies continue in their present path, either these agencies will ruin the blind or the blind will ruin these agencies!"<sup>1</sup>

In 1957 a young Senator from Massachusetts, named John F. Kennedy, introduced into Congress a Bill of Rights for the Blind—ever since known as the Kennedy Bill—expressly to protect our right to organize without interference and to enforce our right to be consulted in the development of policies and programs addressed to the blind. The Kennedy Bill failed, after a memorable week of tumultuous hearings; but it was a Pyrrhic victory for the forces of custodialism. The organized blind had stood up to their overseers, and had not faltered; the blind had led the blind to the barricades, and none had fallen into the ditch. It was the agency front—the Blindness System—that buckled and gave way, if it did not quite fall. Active interference diminished; direct threats and coercion were abandoned. The hot war had ended;

yet it was not peace that descended, but a protracted state of cold war.

"It is not enough that we have survived as an organization," declared a Federation leader in the early sixties; "Or that we continue to endure as a movement. We must and we shall prevail!"<sup>2</sup> And prevail we did. Barrier after barrier, millstone after stumbling-block, have been removed from the path of the advancing blind of America through the intervention of the NFB. For example:

- Were the blind hobbled by traffic laws which effectively deprived them of the right of passage on streets and sidewalks? No more: "White Cane Laws" have been passed in all the fifty states which protect our free movement and prerogative to walk abroad.

- Were the blind arbitrarily excluded by regulation from positions in the Civil Service? No more: through legal cases and persistent pressure this denial of public employment has been turned around, and today (despite continued attempts at evasion by administrators) no qualified blind person can legally be denied the right of application and examination, nor subsequently rejected on grounds of blindness.

- Were the blind systematically turned away from jobs on projects secured by Federal contract? No more: all employers holding contracts with the Federal Government (at least, such is the law since last fall) are required not only to desist from discrimination in hiring but affirmatively to develop plans looking toward the active recruitment of blind and physically handicapped persons.

- Were blind persons often denied the right to enroll in public schools and colleges?

No more—unless such schools are willing to abandon all prospect of Federal funds for education (which none of them is), because the law now ties such grants to guarantees of nondiscrimination against the blind in student enrollment.

- Were the blind forbidden to travel alone, or to purchase a ticket, or to sit where they wish on the nation's railroads? No more: the last vestiges of arbitrary prohibition have been eliminated by regulation from the trains; and the airlines (whose similar acts of discrimination are now being effectively resisted) will not be far behind!

- Were the blind turned away by renters of rooms? refused service by liquor dispensers? prevented from running for elective office? kept out of restaurants because of guide-dog companions? denied access to bank safe-deposit boxes? refused permission to gamble at casinos? spurned by computerized dating services? steered or forced away from normal careers into the time-dishonored "blind trades" of basket-weaving, broom-making, and armchair-sitting? Yes: they were—and they are. But where these were once routine discriminations, meekly accepted and fearfully obeyed, in America today they are increasingly uncommon occurrences greeted with indignation, met with resistance, and answered by massive retaliation.

And soon, to all those questions, we may give the answer of Poe's raven: *Nevermore*.

To be sure, it is not enough to strike at social barriers and restrictive laws without also exposing the roots of those practices in the dark soil of prejudice. Discrimination and prejudice are linked together in a vicious circle of mutual reinforcement. But while discrimination is overt and tangible,

prejudice is covert and hidden—a more elusive target and a more complex problem. Moreover, the prejudice that has always existed toward the blind, and that survives today in only slightly diminished form, is in some ways more intricate (if not more insidious) than the classic forms of racial and religious bigotry of which this audience is well aware. For the miscellany of public attitudes that have made the blind the prisoners of culture are seldom expressed in terms of hatred and hostility—feelings that are at least comprehensible and hence opposable. Prejudice toward the blind more often takes the form of sympathy and sentiment, of patronage and protection. In the view of society, the blind person is “more to be pitied than censured.” At the core of the constellation of myths and illusions surrounding blindness—and by far the greatest barrier to our acceptance as normal, capable, and equal human beings—is the conception of blindness as a *disaster* rather than as a limited liability. Because of its centrality and because of its ramifications, this hidden premise of virtually all thinking about blindness has long been a major concern of the National Federation of the Blind. On the occasion of one of our annual Conventions recently, I addressed the problem in the following manner:

“There are two opposing conceptions of the nature of blindness at large in the world. One of them holds that it is a nuisance, and the other that it is a disaster. I think it is clear that the disaster concept is widespread alike in popular culture and in the learned culture of the professionals. Moreover, I would submit that the concept itself is the *real* disaster—the only real disaster that we as blind people have to live with—and that when we can overcome this monstrous misconception, we shall ring down the curtain forever on the fictional

drama entitled ‘The Tragedy of Blindness.’”<sup>3</sup>

That is how I began my speech. This is how I concluded:

“How are we to reply to the prophets of gloom and doom who cry havoc and have nothing to offer us but whistles in the dark? We might use logic or theory. We might use history or precept. But the simplest and most effective argument comes from our own experience as blind people. Everything which we are and which we have become rises up to give the lie to the disaster concept of blindness. We, the blind people of this country, are *now* working as farmers, lawyers, scientists, and laborers; as teachers, mechanics, engineers, and businessmen. We are now functioning in all of the various professions, trades, and callings of the regular community. We do not regard our lives, as we live them on a day-to-day basis, as tragic or disastrous—and no amount of professional jargon or trumped-up theory can make us do so. We know that with training and opportunity we can compete on terms of equality with our sighted neighbors—and that blindness is merely a physical nuisance.

“The blind people of yesterday, and the day before yesterday, had little choice but to accept the tragic view of the gloom-and-doom mongers—the prophets of despair. Their horizons were limited to the bounty of charity, and their world was bounded by the sheltered workhouse. At every turn they were reminded of their infirmity; on every occasion they were coaxed into immobility and dependency. It is no wonder that they fulfilled the prophecy of despair; believing it themselves, they made it come true (with a little help from their sighted friends).

O "But that was another time, another era, another world. We, the blind people of today, have carried out a revolution and have won our independence. We have won it by finding our own voice, finding our own direction—and finding our own doctrine. That doctrine may be simply stated: It is that the blind are normal people who cannot see. It is that blindness is not a 'dying'—but a challenge to make a new life. It is also that there are none so blind as those who will not see this simple truth.

"The blind people of today, in a word, were not born yesterday. We who are blind do not accept the tragic prophecies of a dire fate. We have a rendezvous with a different destiny. The destiny we go to meet is that of integration and equality—of high achievement and full participation—of free movement and unrestricted opportunity in a friendly land which is already beginning to accept us for what we are.

"That is where the blind are leading the blind. Let those who would resist or deny that destiny remain behind, imprisoned in their own antique myths and images—while the rest of us move on to new adventure and higher ground."<sup>4</sup>

We *have* been moving on. We have not only attained higher ground but reached the farther shore—and have looked out upon a brave new world. It was eleven years ago this week that the International Federation of the Blind was inaugurated, with Dr. Jacobus tenBroek of the United States as its first president. This independent worldwide organization of blind people was established in a deliberate move to counter and correct the international stranglehold maintained by the coalition of custodial agencies making up the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind. For some years

before, pioneering efforts had been underway in many new and old nations of Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America toward the formation of independent blind associations. It was in order to meet this "revolution of rising expectations" on the part of the world's blind people that leaders of the organized blind from several continents joined hands in the common cause of international mobilization. The nature of that common cause—the spirit of Federationism among the blind in America and abroad—was eloquently expressed by Dr. tenBroek in an address before the NFB Convention on the eve of the birth of internationalism:

"The vision which moves us now is nothing less than the image of World Federation. I propose to you tonight that a new and grand objective be added to our established goals and purposes: namely, the inauguration of a World Federation of the Blind.

"And why not? Our own National Federation has blazed the trail and shown the way. We have demonstrated what blind men and women can do in freedom and in concert, through independence and interdependence. We have proved, in the fires of battle, our right to organize, to speak for ourselves, and to be heard. We have established beyond gainsaying our capacity to take the leadership in our own cause. We have slowly and steadily won recognition in the halls of government, in the agencies of welfare, and in the public mind. Through our deeds and programs, by argument and example, in action and philosophy, we have earned respect for ourselves and our fellow blind, the respect of free men and of equals.

"All this, and more, Federationism has done for blind Americans. All this it can do for others. It is time that we shared these fruits of struggle and victory with our

brothers in other lands. Let the word go out from this Convention that we of the National Federation stand ready to lend our efforts and energies to the building of world unity among the blind. Let the liberating principle of Federationism—the spirit of democratic association and collective self-direction—catch fire among the blind people of Asia, of Europe, of Africa, of Latin America, as it caught fire and blazed forth in the hearts of blind Americans twenty years ago, and still sustains them by its warmth.”<sup>5</sup>

Thus was the spirit of Federationism transformed into a worldwide liberation movement. Emboldened by visions of self-realization and achievement, the International Federation has since penetrated the farthest corners of the earth. Its ambassadors and missionaries have traveled tirelessly by airplane, steamship, and white cane to scores of countries carrying the gospel of hope, of unity, and above all of collective self-determination. It has not been a placid journey; the road to equality and interdependence, for the blind people of the world, is strewn with stumbling-blocks. Some are unrelated directly to blindness: poverty, ignorance, and powerlessness. But even these can be reduced and reformed by measures planned to aid and rehabilitate the visually handicapped. It is not by accident that most of the blind are poor, and that many of the poor are blind. It is not by accident that the blind nearly everywhere have been kept in ignorance—untrained, unlettered, and undeveloped. Ignorance is no more than the state of being ignored. That state has ended for the blind in America; it is ending in Europe; it will be ended, step by step and country by country, through the determination and self-determination of blind people themselves.

There have been three identifiable stages in the social history of the blind in the Western world: those of persecution, protection, and participation. For many millenia blindness was regarded as a fate worse than death, and accordingly the blind were consigned to a fate akin to death. Later, through the conscience of the Judeo-Christian heritage and the consciousness of the Greco-Roman, the blind became objects of charity, philanthropy, and welfare. In our own time the third stage has become a reality for some and a possibility for all: the ultimate stage of integration and independence, of participation and power. In summary, it might be said that during the first stage of their existence the blind were people to whom things were done; in the second stage they were people *for* whom things were done; and in the third stage we are people who are doing for ourselves.

That is the essential message of Federationism—and the word that I would bring to you from your fellow blind around the world.

It has never been said better or more clearly than by the father of Federationism, Dr. Jacobus tenBroek. In an address more than a decade ago he said:

“What is this peculiar potent spirit which we call Federationism? What are its explosive ingredients? What does it have to offer to the blind of all nations which they do not have and cannot obtain from their governments, their private agencies and public corporations?

“Federationism is many things to many men. First of all it is an indispensable means of collective self-expression, a megaphone through which the blind may speak their

minds and voice their demands—and be assured of a hearing.

"Federationism is a source of comradeship, the symbol of a common bond, an invitation to commingling and communion—in a word, to brotherhood among the blind.

"Federationism is a tool of political and social action, an anvil on which to hammer out the programs and policies, projects and platforms, that will advance the mutual welfare and security of the blind as a group.

"Federationism is the expression of competence and confidence, the sophisticated construction of able men and women—not a retreat for the lost and foundered. It is a home of the brave and a landmark of the free.

"Federationism is the synonym of independence—the antonym of custodialism and dependency. It is the blind leading themselves, standing on their own feet, walking in their own paths at their own pace by their own command. It is the restoration of pride, the bestowal of dignity, and the achievement of identity.

"Federationism is an agency of orientation—a school for the sightless—an incomparable method of personal rehabilitation and adjustment to the unpopular condition of being blind.

"Federationism is a dedication—a commitment of the mind and heart, an act of faith and an adventure of the spirit, which issues a call to greatness and a summons to service on the part of all who volunteer to enter its ranks.

"Federationism is a spearhead of revolution, bespeaking a rising tide of expectation on the part of the once 'helpless blind'—a blunt repudiation of time-dishonored stereotypes and an organized demand for the

conferral of rights too long withheld and hopes too long deferred.

"These are some—by no means all—of the features and faces of Federationism which are a familiar part of the experience of organized blind Americans. There is nothing about them that is exclusive to Americans or prohibited to others. They are not contraband but common currency. They are as universal as the claims of democracy. Federationism, like blindness, is no respecter of persons or peoples. For purposes of democratic self-organization among us there is neither black nor white, Jew nor Greek, Christian nor Brahman—they are all one within the universal community of the blind. . . .

"A few years before the outbreak of World War II, Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared prophetically that his generation of Americans had a rendezvous with destiny. They did indeed. They kept that rendezvous—and all mankind is thankful that they arrived on time for the appointment. I am convinced that this generation of blind Americans now has a rendezvous with destiny: that we are the advance guard of a movement destined in time to transform the lives and fortunes of the blind people of the world. That transformation will not be accomplished in the first year, or in the first decade, or even in the first generation. But, in the well-remembered words of another President, let us begin. Let us reason together—to compare our experiences, to pool our resources and to combine our strengths. Let us act together, to build our common foundations and to erect our platforms. Let us march together, against the ubiquitous foes of ignorance and folly, prejudice and pride, which stand across our paths the world over.

"Above all, let us begin."

## FOOTNOTES

1. *The First Thirty Years: A History of the National Federation of the Blind*, (Des Moines, Iowa, n. d.) pp. 23, 30.
2. Jacobus tenBroek, "The Federation at Twenty-Five," (*The Braille Monitor*, August, 1965), pp. 86-93.
3. Kenneth Jernigan, "Blindness-The Myth and the Image," (*The Braille Monitor*, September, 1970), pp. 117-125.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Jacobus tenBroek, "The Parliament of Man...The Federation of the World" (*The Blind American*, August 1964) pp. 13-18. □

**OLD DOGS. OLD TRICKS. A NEW TWIST.  
NAC STILL DEALS FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE DECK**

The blind of Louisiana had begun a move to convince the Shreveport Association for the Blind from becoming reaccredited by NAC. It looked as though real progress was being made. But then, when dealing with NAC, that is apparently asking too much.

Through a local member of the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana, an invitation was communicated to John Lemaire, State NFB president, to meet with the Association Director, a Mr. E. J. Robinson, the NAC on-site review team, representatives from the local United Way, one of the funding agencies, and board members from the Association.

The Shreveport Association for the Blind is a private, nonprofit social service agency for the blind consisting of an orientation center, small and limited in scope; a skills evaluation center; and a sheltered workshop which employs approximately sixty blind persons.

Mr. Lemaire called Robinson to confirm the meeting for one p.m., Monday, July 28 at the Association building. Of course, Mr. Robinson never put the details of the meeting invitation in writing.

Louisiana Federationists requested NFB's Second Vice President, Ralph Sanders, to attend the meeting since the NAC team would be on hand.

It was with high hopes, if not great expectations, that John and Agnes Lemaire and Ralph Sanders arrived at the Association building. One cause for high hopes was the general good regard which the blind of Louisiana had held for the Association, and particularly the workshop section. Workers are guaranteed a minimum wage, even when they are on piecework, and an annual two-week paid vacation. There had been a number of complaints with certain aspects of the Association's program, but the blind had generally regarded it as one of the better agencies of its type in Louisiana. It was hoped that the Association would no longer allow its name to be associated with NAC.

As Federationists soon learned, things did not meet up to expectations. That should be no surprise in dealing with NAC.

When Mr. Robinson and the NAC team returned from lunch, they went straight to the conference room and summoned the

Federationists, and a representative from each of the workshop's three divisions. Robinson immediately disappeared.

The NAC team consisted only of three members. In the good old days, when NAC had more member agencies, more friends, and more money, they used a five-man team. Maybe it is lack of money. Or, maybe NAC is having trouble finding enough friends to take part on review teams.

This team consisted of none other than Alex Handel (Federationists have no doubt wondered what became of him after his departure from NAC's Executive Directorship). A Mr. Olsen, who, said he, had previously worked at the New York Lighthouse for the Blind, but failed to say where he now worked, and a Mr. Seeley, a member of the Department of Rehabilitation staff in Florida.

It was immediately obvious to the Federationists that this was quite a different meeting than the one they had expected. It was, in fact, a meeting designed to allow for "consumer input" on the on-site review process. After talking briefly with the Lemaires, Ralph Sanders asked for clarification of the meeting.

Robinson was summoned. He very briskly and with obvious irritation said that Mr. Lemaire's account of the arrangements was simply not accurate. Then he did what men with short tempers often do—he said too much. He explained that Hueston Collingwood, NAC's Associate Director, well known to NAC-trackers, had insisted that he see to it that there be members of the Federation on hand at the meeting. Robinson did not disclose Collingwood's plan for accomplishing this goal.

The Federation has steadfastly refused to take part in the NAC-devised plans for

meaningless "consumer input," persistently maintaining that reform must first take place in the structure of the NAC Board.

The whole game, the tricks, the deceptions were out in the open, once again for the blind of the country to examine.

Lemaire and Sanders then explained that no purpose would be served by a continuation of this meeting, and that they preferred to meet privately with Robinson to discuss the merits of the NAC team's presence in Louisiana at all. Robinson explained that his schedule would not permit it. When Lemaire pressed him, explaining that both he and Sanders had given up their businesses for the day to come to Shreveport, Robinson left the room.

Will NAC and its friends ever learn manners, common courtesies, or even honesty? Apparently this is well beyond the scope of great expectations.

The NAC team expressed the need to move along—explaining that their schedule was terribly tight. So much bother about schedules that it seemed no one had time to be concerned about the blind.

Federationists stayed long enough to learn that the three representatives had been elected under a procedure set forth by Robinson, three weeks in advance of the NAC team visit, and expressly for this meeting. There was considerable confusion about whether sighted staff members had been involved in elections even though it was generally agreed that Robinson had suggested they not vote. There apparently were some shopworkers unhappy with the whole business. All of which was quickly passed over by smiling Alex Handel who tried to ease the situation by saying that you simply can't please all the people all the time.

As usual, Federationists will not be denied. John Lemaire showed the resourcefulness that makes him a leader of the blind of Louisiana by suggesting that the Federationists seek out the United Way and the Association Board. They first attempted to secure a copy of the Association's report so that they might learn the name of its board president. Unfortunately, all copies of the annual report had already been distributed and none was available. They then departed to find Leo Minder, Executive Director of the United Way.

He explained that he was to meet the NAC team the following day. He listened with interest and took a stack of NAC materials. He explained that United Way did not govern its agencies. John Lemaire suggested that they should not cut off all funds from the Association, but that United Way certainly could insist that none of their funds be spent for NAC.

Sanders pointed out that while United Way did not govern, they did have the right to fund or not fund, and that United Way used the blind in their fundraising. Sanders suggested that if the blind of Louisiana got no satisfaction from their efforts to de-NAC the Association, and to have reasonable treatment by the Association staff, that they would naturally go after its funding sources, which would include the United Way. "We're not threatening you, but we want to make it clear that the blind will no longer allow themselves to be used for charitable solicitations where the money is not benefiting the blind," Sanders concluded.

Minder promised to review the matter further, and to report back. He also gave the name of the Association's board president, who, when phoned, agreed to meet with the Federationists, though the notice

was short, and it was now late in the afternoon.

Mr. A. G. Howard is a fairly young insurance executive who recently became board president. He was extremely courteous and interested. He took the material and showed real interest in reading it. There followed a thorough discussion of NAC, the Association, and the rights of the blind of Louisiana. He thanked the group for coming and explained that their timing was especially good since he was to meet with Robinson and the NAC team the next day.

It seemed that everyone who should have been at the Monday meeting was going to be at a Tuesday meeting. Perhaps Robinson had simply confused the issues, or the times. Or, perhaps, he simply had misunderstood the instructions of Hueston Collingwood. Perhaps. But it seems much more plausible that his lack of respect for the legitimate interests of the organized blind movement, that he had allowed himself to become a pawn in NAC's persistent attempts to deal from the bottom of the deck.

Mr. Howard promised to discuss the matter of Robinson's behavior with him on the following day. He asked the Federation to stay in touch. His gestures seemed positive and sincere. He obviously knew little about blindness or the Association, but he seemed willing to learn.

Leaving the offices of A. G. Howard, the Lemaires and Sanders made their way to the airport for homeward-bound flights. They had come to Shreveport to meet with Mr. Robinson, the NAC Team, United Way, and the Association Board. The only one who didn't visit long was Mr. Robinson. Though NAC had planned the day otherwise, all parties were informed, material was distributed, and the Shreveport Assoc-

iation, and particularly Mr. Robinson may have learned a good lesson in both the determination and resourcefulness of the Federation.

No, NAC, old tricks won't work—even with a new twist. And an old hand simply isn't fast enough to deal from the bottom of the deck. □

#### ARKANSAS SHUFFLES THE CARDS

STATE OF ARKANSAS,  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND  
REHABILITATIVE SERVICES,  
OFFICE FOR THE BLIND AND  
VISUALLY IMPAIRED.

*Little Rock, Arkansas, August 7, 1975.*

Mr. RALPH SANDERS,  
*President, National Federation  
of the Blind of Arkansas,*  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

DEAR MR. SANDERS: The Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired is seeking accreditation through a self-study process. The accrediting agency, the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) On-Sight Review Team will be in Little Rock, August 17-20, 1975, to review the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired as part of the accreditation process.

You are invited to participate in the Consumer Conference on Sunday, August 17, 1975, at 3:30 p.m., at 104 South State Street, Little Rock. At this time you will have a chance to meet and talk with the review team. The team will be asking about the services of the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired and your evaluation of those services. Mr. Robert Pogorelc, Chairman of the Review Team, will be conducting the Conference.

If you, or a representative of your organization, are not able to attend the Consumer

Conference, please notify my office at 371-2587, by August 11.

Sincerely,

HARRY D. VINES,  
*Deputy Commissioner.*

cc: Hueston Collingwood

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND OF ARKANSAS,  
*Little Rock, Arkansas, August 13, 1975.*

HARRY VINES,  
*Director, Office for the Blind  
and Visually Impaired,*  
Little Rock, Arkansas.

Mr. VINES: On August 11, 1975, I received your letter dated August 7 discussing plans of the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired to go forward with Accreditation by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC).

I regret the lateness of my receipt of your letter. I, and the representative blind of Arkansas, however, feel much more regretful that you *ever* wrote the letter.

In a meeting with Dr. Roger Bost in 1974, I felt that we reached a reasonable agreement—that services for the blind in this State would not take final steps toward

accreditation until national issues involving the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) were satisfactorily resolved. It is my memory that this compromise was your suggestion. If my memory is correct, then I feel you have committed a gross violation of your word and your trust to the blind of this State. If my memory is incorrect, then we, the blind of Arkansas, acting on bad advice, have sat patiently by for many months while potential additional harm was being done in our name.

I feel no need to recount for you in this letter all that has happened since our meeting with Dr. Bost other than to reiterate that two agencies which had accredited with NAC, Mississippi Services for the Blind and Blind Industries of Maryland, have both disaccredited, feeling that accreditation had been at best useless; Federal funds supporting NAC have been withdrawn, and at least one prestigious private foundation ceased providing funds to NAC.

Bert Risley, Director of the Texas Commission for the Blind, has now gone on record as not being willing to submit the Texas Commission or any other agency in Texas to NAC accreditation. But these facts you also know, and yet you have ignored them.

In light of all this and much more, you cannot honestly tell the taxpayers of Arkansas, those who must, in addition to the blind of the State, bear the cost of NAC's on-site review team and additional accreditation expenses, that it is simply one group, one faction which opposes NAC, its shameful behavior and its refusal to stand for meaningful accountability. Neither can you find protection in the fact that three

blind Arkansans have marred their names by allowing themselves to become members of NAC's board, or that two agencies for the blind in Arkansas have forever injured their past record by becoming accredited. Even numbers cannot be used to prove good something which through its actions has proven itself bad. In fact, I am at a loss to figure how you can, in any fashion, justify your actions.

As we have said repeatedly, we favor accreditation. But accreditation must be meaningful. We would strongly support the plan increasingly being adopted around the country of developing standards within the State, responding to local environmental factors. One must only wonder why you would fear such a process.

Mr. Vines, throughout the entirety of your tenure as head of services for the blind, the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas has attempted to work with you and your staff. On every turn we have met with bad faith and recriminations. The current issue seems a final culmination. Do you really believe that the blind of this State will forever continue to take, on good faith, seeming agreements as a replacement for real partnership?

It seems totally unnecessary to respond to the direct question raised in your letter, but I will do so for the record. As we have stated consistently in the past, we will not take part in any activities of NAC, no matter how they have been contrived to pretend to involve consumer input, while the NAC Board totally refuses any consideration of meaningful input by the blind at the policy level. So that you may not mistake what I am saying, neither I, nor any other representative of the organized blind of Arkansas will be present for the

Sunday meeting. There are ample forums in the State to discuss the performance of the Office for the Blind. Such forums seem, at present, to offer much more positive possibilities for meaningful consumer involvement than the meeting you and NAC have staged. It is the consensus of the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas to seek out such forums in the future.

RALPH SANDERS,  
*President, National Federation  
of the Blind of Arkansas.*

cc: Russell Baxter  
Governor David Pryor  
Hueston Collingwood

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND OF ARKANSAS,  
*Little Rock, Arkansas, August 18, 1975.*

*To All Members of the Board for the  
Oregon Commission for the Blind:*

I am sending you a copy of correspondence between myself, as president of the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas and Harry Vines, Director of the Office for the Blind here in Arkansas.

This correspondence refers to activities of the Director of the Oregon Commission, Bob Pogorelc.

You will note that Mr. Pogorelc was in Arkansas, August 17 through 20 to serve as chairman of NAC's on-site review team.

As my letter to Vines suggests, we, the blind of Arkansas, are willing to take our opposition to NAC accreditation to the public and the State Legislature to see that

our State-funded agency does not support the harmful activities of the NAC.

I am sending this correspondence to you so that you may understand my remarks about the presence of Bob Pogorelc in Arkansas.

We, the blind of Arkansas, previously had no reason to feel ill will toward Mr. Pogorelc or the Oregon Commission for the Blind. But we believe that his presence here is against the best interest of the blind and he is lending his good name to harm being done to us.

We strongly believe that the blind of Arkansas and of Oregon could have been better served if Mr. Pogorelc would have stayed at home performing his responsibilities to the blind of Oregon.

We would also question the extent to which the Board of the Oregon Commission for the Blind has aided in hurting the blind of Arkansas by allowing Mr. Pogorelc to come here for such an activity. We would certainly like to know if Mr. Pogorelc is here on vacation time, or if he is being paid.

In case you are not familiar with the position we have taken regarding the NAC, I am asking the leadership of our Oregon affiliate to provide you with the extensive background we have compiled on the struggle the blind have had in attempting to bring about meaningful reform of NAC.

We have no quarrel with the concept of accreditation. In fact, we feel very strongly that there is a need to improve the services of agencies serving the blind. Demonstrated by its history, however, the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving

the Blind and Visually Handicapped, as now constituted and operated, offers no hope for accomplishing this goal. It has accredited a number of the worst agencies for the blind in the country, at least in the view of the blind whom such agencies serve. It has refused to listen to the blind, and accept the blind as capable and proper participants in the standard-setting activity, but has chosen instead to fight us on every turn.

We believe it is a fundamental tenet of our democracy, as well as a basic ethical right, that the blind themselves should be the ones determining policies which will affect their lives.

Our efforts to bring about meaningful reform of NAC have been long and expensive, but we, the blind, will not falter in our determination to see this struggle through to the end.

We are encouraged. Recently, the Director of the Texas Commission for the Blind, and president of NCSAB, wrote to NAC officials explaining that he would not seek accreditation by NAC, nor would he recommend that any agency serving the blind of Texas do so.

The workshop for the blind of Maryland withdrew from NAC's accreditation. Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare were cut off. The Mississippi agency for the blind withdrew from accreditation. The prestigious Bingham Foundation refused to renew funds to NAC. The list grows.

And yet, your employee, a public servant of the blind of Oregon, comes to Arkansas to further NAC's shameful record, and to bring discredit to his own agency in Oregon.

We believe that Mr. Pogorelc could have better served his interest for standards for

agencies serving the blind, by staying home and working with the blind of Oregon to develop standards which they, the legitimate accrediting group, would accept.

I hope that you will think about what we have had to say and that you will reflect on it. We believe that unknowingly you have done a great disservice to the blind of Arkansas by allowing Mr. Pogorelc to come here. I will look to hear from you to see if you will take proper steps to prevent this from happening to the blind of other states.

Sincerely,

RALPH SANDERS,  
President, *National Federation  
of the Blind of Arkansas.*

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THE NATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF THE BLIND OF ARKANSAS,  
*Little Rock, Arkansas, August 20, 1975.*

STATEMENT BY  
RALPH W. SANDERS, PRESIDENT

The central question of whether the blind will be the ones to determine programs affecting their own lives, or whether we will be forced to sit idly by while others determine our lives, comes sharply into focus here in Arkansas.

A six-member team representing the National Accreditation Council (NAC) for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped is today completing an on-site review of the programs of the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired, a unit of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services.

For many months, the administration of the Office for the Blind has been aware of our opposition to the use of State funds in supporting NAC. Yet, the current administration has ignored our views.

The blind of this Nation have for many years now sought meaningful reform of NAC. We believe strongly in the concept of accreditation, but, as it is now constituted, NAC officials have flatly refused to allow the blind to be equal partners in the business of accreditation.

We believe that in this State the best group to determine the quality of services of an agency serving the blind is the blind of Arkansas.

We intend to continue to oppose the NAC, with all our energy and funds, no matter what personal sacrifice it may require, until NAC either reforms or ceases to exist.

The Office for the Blind has for some time been inadequately funded, offering services to a limited number of blind Arkansans. Instead of using what funds they do have for rehabilitation purposes, the Director, Harry Vines, has chosen instead to

spend those funds on seeking accreditation which the blind find unacceptable.

We believe the public of Arkansas, as well as the blind of this State, are being shortchanged.

We, the blind of Arkansas, feel strongly that our interest would better be served by the Office for the Blind if more of its time and funds were directed toward improving its current program of service delivery.

We further feel that Robert Pogorelc, Director of the Oregon Commission for the Blind, and the other members of the team have come into this State at a time when the blind of Arkansas and the blind of their own states would have been better served had they stayed at home working on improving services to the blind.

We solicit the assistance of the public, the Legislature, and Governor Pryor in making certain that funds of the State of Arkansas are not used to support any activities of NAC.

We further seek their assistance in making certain that blind Arkansans have their proper role in determining programs that will affect our lives. □

#### MRS. GRANNIS CORRESPONDS WITH A LIBRARY USER

DEAR MRS. GRANNIS: I have a few ideas I would like to have your opinions on. You must be aware of the decline in library service to the blind since other handicapped people became eligible for service from the same libraries. Would it not simplify things and make the work easier too, if Braille, large type, and records were in separate libraries? I think there should be a regular record library in every city. The large type books should be available in every library for the convenience of the aged and others who are not really blind. This would make it possible for the Braille books to be housed in a library by themselves and be available

to the blind for whom they were meant. It is beyond all reason to expect one library to serve the blind and other handicapped people in a state, and sometimes even in more than one state. Some public libraries now loan various material on discs. So why not a regular record library? A large number of older people do not hear well. Therefore it is a strain for them to listen to recording machines. For this reason large type material should be a part of the collection in all public libraries. My suggestions would seem to save money for the Federal Government. But do you know, I suspect that the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

of the Library of Congress wants to claim a very large clientele in order to get more money to spend. It is interested in its own prestige, and not in giving better service to any one group of handicapped people.

But do they realize that private Braille libraries could just about put the DBPH out of business. I hope more publishing houses will eventually cater to the needs of the handicapped. There is certainly a big market for large type books. I would like you to show this letter to Mr. Jernigan, and tell me what he thinks of my suggestions.

Mr. Jernigan seems to have a frustrating time making the bureaucrats understand his letters. I think the reason is that although he does not say in his letters what they say he said, he leaves room for them to infer that he said it. When we are dealing with bureaucrats we must talk as if they were children and make everything perfectly plain, even at the risk of repetition.

Thank you again Mrs. Grannis.

Sincerely,

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*Des Moines, Iowa.*

DEAR ——: Library service to blind persons has been threatened by several proposals and programs instituted for the non-blind. In fact, we were among the most vocal skeptics when the Library of Congress said that the blind would not see their service deteriorate when the Division for the Blind became the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Their assurance notwithstanding, the blind have had to persevere to see that their service simply held its own—let alone make much needed progress. We will keep at this task.

I believe Braille and recorded books both should be part of one library for the blind.

To separate the two would mean that many blind persons would have to deal with two different systems, staffs, and procedures. The problem that I sense you are concerned about is a real one—the fact that most libraries for the blind emphasize recorded media (particularly talking books) and give little attention to Braille. However, I fear that separating the two would only have the effect of taking one poor library service and making two poorer ones. What must be done is to convince librarians (and a good many blind people) that Braille is indeed a good reading technique. When the people who direct and work in libraries for the blind come to believe in Braille, I think that regional libraries can and will give good service—both to Braille and recorded borrowers.

As to the role of large print in libraries for the blind, my belief is that it is helpful to have some large print materials. We find that our large print collection often serves as a means for making initial contact with potential borrowers of other media. An individual with deteriorating vision will sometimes contact us about using large print but soon discover that his eyesight is such that he cannot effectively use it. Many public libraries do have large print collections, and I believe this is a service that they should continue to provide. Many regional and state library systems also have large print.

Your observation about corresponding with bureaucrats is interesting. Often one must repeat and repeat and repeat the message.

Thank you for taking the time to share your comments.

Very truly yours,

(Mrs.) FLORENCE GRANNIS,  
*Librarian.*



## ACCREDITATION AND CONSUMERISM

## ... SOME FRANK COMMENTS

BY

BURT L. RISLEY

*Executive Director, Texas Commission for the Blind*

## INTRODUCTION

This past April, in my capacity as the current president of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, I received a letter from the National Accreditation Council transmitting a copy of the accreditation standards presently being used for orientation and mobility services. The letter set out a request for our organization to, "...critically review these standards to insure that they reflect the needs of all populations served and express the best of current practice, pertinent literature, and related developments in the field." A June 1 deadline was requested for the completion of this review, with no preliminary work or recommended changes being indicated.

At the time, virtually every member of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind was heavily involved with one or more state matters of urgent importance to blind citizens of the United States. In some states, agencies were fighting to survive as identifiable units of state government. In other states, members were struggling to develop a more adequate organizational capability for responding effectively to the substantive needs of blind individuals within such states. Still other members were involved with various bills offered for the purposes of bringing greater dignity and expanded opportunities to blind citizens via statutes which would prohibit various forms of discrimination, inaugurate new or improved state use programs, allow admini-

strative practices to conform to the requirements of the 1974 Amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act, or simply establish a new service so simple but valuable as permitting blind individuals to receive identification cards through the state agency responsible for the issuance of driver's licenses. Additionally, in nearly every state, members of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind were heavily preoccupied with the matter of obtaining adequate appropriations in a time of extreme economic difficulty.

Confronted with critically important and sometimes exceedingly difficult—but compellingly specific and immediate—state matters, various NCSAB members, who had previously been participating in the National Accreditation Council's review of its standards, contacted me to request that they be relieved of this responsibility. The sheer demands upon their time made it impossible to give adequate and meaningful attention to the various sets of NAC standards, unless matters of fundamentally greater consequence and urgency were to be prejudiced.

Accordingly, on May 6, 1975, I responded to NAC's request. After noting the situation which immediately confronted most NCSAB members, I advised NAC that copies of the April correspondence were being forwarded to the NCSAB Executive Board and suggested that such individuals as might

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be represented thereon and as might be able to find the time would offer their responses to NAC directly.

Then, after first stressing that I purported to speak for no one other than Burt L. Risley and the staff of the Texas Commission for the Blind, I proceeded to favor NAC with the critical review that organization had requested of its present standards for orientation and mobility services.

Making no attempt to conceal the great disappointment and growing frustration felt by myself and by my associates and colleagues in Texas, I raised what I perceived to be a number of crucial issues. In general, my comments accorded closely with the policies stated in a comprehensive and detailed position statement previously adopted—with a unanimous vote—by the NCSAB on the issue of accreditation.

The specificity and rigidity of the standards were questioned. Concern was expressed about the fact that the overriding emphasis of the standards was not placed upon the practical impact of orientation and mobility services on the daily lives of blind individuals. It was suggested that since most reputable agencies for the blind have progressed to a point of technical proficiency in this area, the mere existence of highly detailed standards is viewed as possibly condescending. Beyond this, however, given the fact that the American Association of Workers for the Blind was already in the process of conducting a similar effort, it occurred to me that this was quite possibly duplicative and repetitive and that there was no necessity for NAC's promulgation of orientation and mobility standards in the first instance.

Apparently, the letter of May 6 has acquired a certain amount of quite

unintended currency and notoriety in this field. A frank but critical response was given to what I then regarded, and still do regard, as a request made in good faith. And in recent days, I find valued friends and respected associates asking where I stand on the issues of accreditation and consumerism; therefore, it has been suggested to me that it might be advisable to furnish some clarification.

It is, of course, impossible for any one letter, directed specifically to a narrow and highly specialized service area such as orientation and mobility services, accurately to reflect one's entire position on issues so broad and complex as those of accreditation and consumerism. One's position on these issues is better evidenced by one's actions—by where an individual has consistently stood and by such action as that which an individual has consistently taken throughout his years of service in this field.

While I should think that my record quite adequately reflects my position on the issues of accreditation and consumerism, I certainly have no hesitancy about explicitly summarizing my views on these matters. Moreover, since one letter alone seems to have stimulated much of this discussion, it seems that a logical starting point for such a summarization is with a reexamination of that letter. Specifically, do the narrowly directed comments contained in that letter inadvertently and inaccurately misrepresent fundamental positions on broader and more basic issues than orientation and mobility services?

Together with associates and fellow workers at the Texas Commission for the Blind, whose performance and perceptions have tended substantially to shape my own views on accreditation and consumerism, I have carefully reviewed the May 6 letter.

This review, moreover, has been conducted with careful attention to collateral documents and related correspondence emanating from the Texas Commission for the Blind in recent years.

Such a review having been completed, I find no basis for qualification, equivocation, or additional clarification. When I corresponded with the National Accreditation Council on May 6, I meant exactly what I said and I said precisely what I felt needed to be stated. I now reaffirm every point and every particular conveyed to NAC on behalf of my fellow workers and myself. In

short, I stand on what I said to NAC on May 6—modifying and “re-clarifying” not a paragraph, not a line, nor even a word contained in that correspondence.

In order, however, that my overall position on these issues may be adequately understood, it is necessary that views on specific matters be stated within the context of a concern which I, along with an increasing number of other individuals in this field of work, have about the extent to which the issues of accreditation and consumerism appear to be obsessing—and untenably obstructing—work for the blind at this time.

#### I. THE WAR OVER ACCREDITATION IN PERSPECTIVE

The bitter controversy in which the accreditation movement has become enmeshed represents a growing and increasingly untenable tragedy. This divisive, internecine conflict depletes resources needed for the achievement of more constructive goals both at institutional and individualistic levels. Of necessity this conflict weakens work for the blind and diminishes many who are involved in that work. Ultimately and inevitably, this controversy is indulged to the long-range detriment of blind Americans, including both those who are now living and those who will be a fractional component of our society in the years to come.

Standards for the various specialized areas making up “work for the blind” are important. Neither the specific content of various sets of standards nor the precise process by which that content is established, however, can appropriately be regarded as the paramount issue of this field.

Instead, the issue which is of pre-eminent consequence to organizations that would serve the blind or to organizations that

would represent the blind or to blind individuals themselves is that there, in fact, be something known as “work for the blind” in the years ahead.

There is an operative reality which the blind and the organizations which would serve the blind, either as providers of services or as advocates, cannot safely ignore. That reality is: all too many blind individuals simply are not receiving the kinds of services they need and to which they are entitled. These deficits and deficiencies in service have very little, if indeed anything, to do with whether agencies and facilities for the blind have or have not submitted to accreditation.

The lack of adequate programmatic impact and coverage is, rather, a function of more profoundly limiting deficiencies. These deficiencies arise, in the first instance, because appropriate organizational systems and structures have not been developed to assure more effective response to the special service needs of the blind. The deficiencies are, in the second instance, compounded

because such systems as are established for the blind are not provided fiscal and other resources commensurate to the scope of the problems these systems are expected to redress. And, if the inappropriateness and anemia of service systems are not enough to guarantee the unavailability or inadequacy of services, agencies generally may expect to be confronted with an assortment of mindless and unnecessary constraints in the form of legalistic complications, oppressive bureaucracies, as well as uninformed attitudes, misconceptions and discriminatory prejudices.

The fact is that there are blind individuals in this country who have considerable difficulty in putting enough food on their tables to feed themselves and their families properly.

This being the case, it would seem that the first order of priority for everyone involved—service organizations, advocacy organizations, and the blind themselves—would be to strive to develop adequate and appropriate service delivery systems to assure that all blind Americans have more decent roofs over their heads, tables under those roofs, and sufficient food to put on those tables.

But what is the issue that currently obsesses work for the blind throughout the United States: accreditation, its exhaustively detailed components, and the mechanisms through which those fine details are to be considered, discussed, split, refined, and incorporated into final sets of standards.

If deficiencies of service systems are so substantial as to guarantee that the basic needs of a considerable number of blind individuals will, with certainty, go unmet, why give first priority to fine-tuning vehicles

which may be inherently incapable of carrying the necessary loads?

If substantial numbers of blind individuals are lacking sufficient and appropriate food, do organizations purportedly constituted to serve the blind discharge their responsibilities by quarreling over the pattern of the china with which the table is to be set, how the utensils are to be laid out and who will be in charge of seating arrangements?

The fact that this controversy over accreditation exists involves a paradox which makes the situation only the more tragic. That paradox consists of this: on a conceptual basis, there would be little necessity for the existence of an accreditation movement nor of advocacy organizations if agencies and facilities serving the blind performed that function effectively. Organizations of blind individuals come into existence because of the unavailability or inadequacy of service; accreditation systems are developed—if not to make services more available—then ostensibly to make already available services more adequate.

Given this commonality of purpose on a conceptual basis, accreditation and consumerism ought to be blended and united on a practical but potent operating basis. Tragically and increasingly untenably, that which ought to be a powerful force for change and progress in this field has instead become the primary basis for disunity, strife, and debilitation.

How long is this to be tolerated by organizations operating in the field, by legislative bodies, by the general public, and by the blind themselves? How many additional organizations and individuals are going to

allow themselves to "choose sides" in a game they should not play?

The accreditation movement cannot be allowed to operate in a manner which brings discredit to everything else in this field.

And neither can controversy over issues of appropriate consumer involvement in accreditation be permitted to consume disproportionate portions of the resources, initiatives, and opportunities which might, in the absence of heated contention, be directed toward the very improvements in services for which advocacy organizations presumably exist in the first instance.

Somehow the controversy must be abated in its current intensity, and the fundamental problems which led to unreasonable conflict must be addressed and resolved. For those who are interested in seeing this accomplished, this does not mean wading into the thick of the battle. Rather, this does mean remaining aloof from the battle and getting on with the more significant work immediately at hand. Accreditation and consumerism, as epitomized by those organizations now essentially deadlocked in this struggle, can join in the effort to bring about more adequate service systems and structures (and a redirection of the enormous effort

presently being expended on inherently dysfunctional conflicts), and can serve to accelerate progress in this field at a rate without precedent in the history of work for the blind. Or, intransigence and fratricide may continue—with others in this field having to decide whether to become involved in such profitless activities or whether to proceed in attempting to bring about necessary progress, albeit at a considerably slower pace than might otherwise be possible.

What are the prospects for reconciliation of the current differences?

At various times in the past, both of the major adversaries have indicated an agreement in principle to the major points set out in the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind's position statement on accreditation. To a large degree, then, it would be reasonable to suppose that the prospects for achieving an armistice would center around the inclination and capacity of the organization to which the policy statement was directed to accommodate itself to those far-reaching changes recommended by the very agencies most looked to for the funding of any accreditation standards used in work for the blind.

## II. POSITION ON ACCREDITATION

On April 28, 1974, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind adopted a comprehensive policy statement on the issue of accreditation of agencies serving the blind and visually handicapped.

Acknowledging the major contribution which the COMSTAC report represented at the time of its publication, the NCSAB's statement went on to point out that many

far-reaching and significant changes have since taken place in this field. A strong commitment was expressed to the concept of accreditation. The statement then proceeded to call for a major revamping of the accreditation process to accommodate the changes which had taken place since publication of the COMSTAC report and to facilitate adaptation to the additional changes which were expected to occur in the future.

Review for the purpose of "updating" existing sets of standards represents a grossly inadequate response to the type of change the NCSAB has proposed as essential. What the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind has called for is not emphasis upon making more current the various sets of standards already in existence, but rather that priority be placed upon a major revision of the philosophical undergirding and operating procedures currently found in the accreditation movement.

The NCSAB's position calls for the thrust of all standards to be squarely and directly related to the question of how substantial an impact the services of an agency have upon the daily lives of the agency's clients. In lieu of preoccupation over such issues as how many representatives of which organizations will be represented on what boards of which accreditation bodies and under what conditions, the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind has recommended that such issues be rendered primarily academic and theoretical. The suggested mechanism to allow such issues to be dispensed with is a recommended standard—for all services—which would assure that services be meaningfully evaluated from the perspective of the individual who receives those services.

The statement suggests that an accrediting body cannot safely assume that appropriate

systems and structures for the timely and effective provision of services have, or somehow will, spontaneously come into existence. The NCSAB has proposed, therefore, that standards put first things first—requiring a basic capability for the provision of certain types of services, before getting concerned about the specifications and blueprints to be used in providing those services.

The NCSAB's position further recommends that, within certain broad parameters defined primarily according to the practical impact of services upon the lives of blind individuals, agencies serving the blind and visually handicapped—rather than a national accrediting body—be encouraged and not inhibited in determining what minute details will characterize services for the blind and visually handicapped within a particular state or within a particular community. Overwhelmingly, the NCSAB's position rejects inordinate concern about formal credentials and calls instead for accrediting bodies to look to demonstrated competencies—as determined in large part by the perceptions of recipients of services.

I claim no credit for the formulation or writing of the NCSAB's general position on accreditation. However, I endorse and support the NCSAB's position entirely and without qualification.

### III. POSITION ON NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

As is evident from the tone of the letter I sent to the National Accreditation Council on May 6, I personally and individually find myself most disappointed about the lack of improvements NAC has made in the accreditation process. More than a year has passed since state agencies for the blind—the real "consumers" in the accreditation

arena from the standpoint of financial liability—presented their position and recommendations to NAC. As to certain narrow and specific points in various sets of standards, a certain amount of effort has been made by NAC to accommodate certain recommendations of the NCSAB; insofar as the broad thrust of the NCSAB's position is

concerned, however, responsive action has not been substantial. There simply has not been the generalized, overall effort at a major revamping of the entire accreditation system.

And rather than improving, NAC's situation is deteriorating. Federal funding has been eliminated. Adverse publicity has been enormous. Few agencies appear to be rushing to get accredited, and one sometimes wonders if those agencies that are getting newly involved with accreditation are doing so for the right reasons. The indication, to be blunt, is that some of the agencies now affiliating with the accreditation movement do so primarily to express support for the concept of accreditation, and to stand up and be counted among those who have no affinity for the organization that serves as NAC's primary antagonist; few seriously represent that accreditation in and of itself will contribute to improvement in the scope and quality of services.

While I find myself increasingly dismayed by this entire situation, I have no interest in the destruction of the National Accreditation Council; others who may have made a commitment to such a goal will simply have to carry out their efforts without the assistance of anyone associated with the Texas Commission for the Blind.

On the other hand, most of us who are involved in this field of work in Texas have endeavored, and will for a reasonable time in the future continue to endeavor, to provide any assistance representatives of NAC might request in relation to trying to bring about constructive changes in accreditation which generally conform to those recommended by the NCSAB. Absent some evidence of constructive change, we have no interest in uniting with those forces who have expressed the avowed goal of "destroying NAC." In our state, as presumably is

true of most states, there simply are too many things which need attending to and which are immediately relevant to services for the blind. Involvement in an exhausting, and ultimately pointless, battle over an expended and irrelevant—if this proves to be the case—accrediting body in a distant part of the country would do nothing to improve the daily lives of blind and visually handicapped people in Texas.

My personal feeling is that there is one, and only one, organization that possesses the capacity to destroy NAC. While others might hasten the demise, it essentially is up to NAC itself to make the basic decisions and to take the necessary actions which will determine if NAC survives and flourishes through significant contributions to this field or, alternatively, if NAC is eventually to fade into oblivion—work for the blind's equivalent of the Volstead Act, a noble experiment that failed.

Accreditation is, in the final analysis, a product. As with any other product, its value must primarily be a function of its intrinsic utility and desirability to those who are asked to buy.

What the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind said to the National Accreditation Council in the position adopted on April 28, 1974, was that accreditation for agencies serving the blind and visually handicapped needs to be made considerably more utilitarian in terms of the conditions and responsibilities currently confronting such agencies—and considerably more attractive in terms of the perception of consumer organizations about the relevance of accreditation.

The current impasse on accreditation represents something which, in my judgment, reasonable men can and should

resolve. Unfortunately, reason and logic have taken a back seat to recrimination and rancor. This must be changed, or else the more thoughtful people in this field—including leaders of organizations for the blind as well as leaders of organizations of the blind—must begin to address these questions: exactly what is it with which we are going to replace NAC, and in what ways will the

new organization be any better than what we already have?

The observations offered by William Drummond, a Scottish poet, appear useful to all who are presently concerned about the accreditation movement: "He who will not reason is a bigot; he who cannot is a fool; and he who dares not, is a slave."

#### IV. POSITION ON CONSUMERISM

In my state, we try to avoid applying the term, "consumers," to blind individuals who happen to be clients of service organizations. The use of a term such as, "consumer," does not accord with our concept of a blind individual's role in the service process. When the service process is being conducted, our clients do not sit around idly and individually unidentified "consuming" anything; instead, they *contribute* greatly, directly and vitally to the accomplishment of those ends for which services are authorized in the first instance.

We do not think that our tendency to avoid applying the term, "consumers," to clients represents some sort of peculiar idiosyncrasy unique to this region of the country. In work for the blind, as in all other human services programs, this crucial issue is rapidly emerging: what, exactly, is the appropriate role of individuals in influencing the direction and evaluating the effectiveness of services provided for their benefit?

Insofar as state programs for the blind might be concerned, Congress has very much defined what the scope and nature of a blind individual's participation should be in matters which vitally impact or impinge upon his opportunities and the quality of his life. In rehabilitation legislation as well

as in the Randolph-Sheppard Act Amendments of 1974, the contemplated role is one in which a form of partnership is to be created between the providers of services and the recipients of services. Already, there are indications that this partnership concept will be extended to service areas beyond the rehabilitation field, i.e., special education.

If it is beyond question that some sort of partnership relation is to characterize the service process, the core question relates to the nature of the partnership to be established. What are the conditions under which clients are to be admitted to the partnership? Do clients (or the organizations that advocate the interests of clients) come in as full partners or as limited partners?

The venerable and ancient history out of which the special acumen which we currently refer to as "work for the blind" evolved perhaps renders this a particularly difficult issue with which to come to grasp. The precepts of this field are not rooted in concepts which relate to constitutionally protected rights; work for the blind preceded the Constitution of the United States by many centuries. Primarily, therefore, the rationale for the existence of something known as, "work for the blind," is rooted in charitable traditions, in the

impulses of conscience and humanitarianism, and in a paternalistic sense of noblesse oblige.

These days, there is no room whatever in an effective working partnership relation for the maintenance of a paternalistic sense of noblesse oblige.

Applying the term, "consumer," to a blind client, therefore, impresses some of us as the lingering manifestation of a certain sense of paternalism which continues to afflict this field. There is a fundamental and irreconcilable incongruence between the partnership concept and the image of an Oliver Twist tremulously standing up in an eleemosynary institution of the pre-Industrial Age to ask in a quivering voice, "Please, sir, may I have more milk?"

The preferred relationship, in my view, is one in which service organizations and organizations representing the individuals served sit down together and say, in effect, "There just isn't enough milk, there never is, and there never is going to be, unless we do something. We need to develop some kind of a plan of action and to work together in carrying out that plan, to make sure that this gets corrected."

Paternalistic attitudes—overt or subconscious—on the part of those who would assist the blind invite militant response. Militancy, then, breeds adversarial relationships. An effective partnership cannot long be maintained when the parties stand in an adversarial posture.

I argue that the time has come for organizations involved in serving the blind to eliminate all indicia of lingering, but inappropriate, attitudes of noblesse oblige—and to then proceed in inviting blind individuals

or the organizations that represent them into this field as full, complete, and valued partners.

But advocacy and/or service facilitative organizations entering the partnership on this basis have to be prepared to accept and discharge the responsibilities accompanying their rights within this partnership. Militancy cannot be an end in and of itself. There is much about which all of us can righteously be militant, but if we are to be effective, we need to do considerably more than take a few occasional and indiscriminate pot-shots. Targets need to be collectively identified with greater precision, the cannons need to be tended in cooperation, and a system needs to be developed for more precisely assessing how close we are coming to the target at which we might be shooting.

Among some, militancy in reaction to that which is inadequate, mediocre, or demeaning has become almost reflexive—a predictable and conditioned response. This is understandable. The frustration occasioned by centuries of paternalism, denied opportunities, and ignorant discrimination is deeply ingrained. Oppression, even though motivated by benevolence, is still oppressive. In an era in which other oppressed minority groups are observed standing up and demanding equality as a matter of right, it is inevitable that organizations representing the blind should become more militant; but this is in fact appropriate.

I argue, though, that this militancy needs to be more appropriately directed and certainly not dissipated entirely upon a horse which, if not entirely moribund, is unquestionably quite lame at the present time.

Through the establishment of the kind of partnership about which I am talking,

virtually anything which needs to be accomplished within this field and for those individuals for whom the field exists could in fact be accomplished. Absent unified and concerted action on the part of all parties of interest, progress will at best be fragmentary, inadequate, and slow. The continued maintenance of the kind of hostility presently surrounding an issue such as NAC, moreover, can only result in the

further diminution of this field, both in absolute and relative terms.

The burden of bringing about a conciliation and resolution of present differences, it seems to me, is not appropriately to be placed upon organizations of the blind; the burden is more equitably and more effectively placed upon organizations responsible for serving the blind.

#### V. FUTURE ACTION

I personally maintain membership in no organization established for the purpose of advocating the interests of blind individuals, unless it can be said that advocacy of such interests has become a defined function of certain professional organizations in this field. In my state, blind individuals belong to as many as six separate organizations which, from time to time, vigorously articulate sometimes conflicting viewpoints. It is my feeling that my personal involvement with any such organization in Texas might unnecessarily inhibit at least a few other blind individuals in their exercise of the rights of free speech or free association. I recognize, of course, that situations and circumstances vary considerably from state to state.

Neither is it my policy to accept appointment to some organization desiring my involvement as a "consumer representative." My acceptance of such invitations, very frankly, would not likely afford those organizations the kind of "consumer involvement" they really need; others are more competent to articulate the views and needs of blind individuals who have been inadequately or ineffectively touched by programs of rehabilitation, special education, or related types of services. The views of those blind individuals who have

been adequately and effectively served are not in urgent need of articulation.

But, while most of my staff and I maintain formal membership in none of the major organizations of the blind, we do attempt to maintain effective communications and adequate working relationships with all of them. Generally speaking, the more formal the system for accomplishing this, the less effective the relationships. In lieu of highly structured mechanisms for obtaining input and feedback, we place the emphasis upon being accessible and receptive to that which is offered.

How information and feedback are received is considerably less important than is the matter of what use is made of the information once it is received.

It may be presumptuous of me, in examining methods by which we might strive to bring about improvements in this field nationally, to extrapolate from the experiences I have had in Texas. Those experiences, however, represent my only point of departure, and, in addition, it would be ungracious and inaccurate of me to claim that such success as that which our state program may have enjoyed is primarily the result of the program's leadership or the unusual competencies of its staff.

Whatever success the Texas Commission for the Blind has experienced in accomplishing that which it is supposed to be accomplishing is largely a function of a considerable amount of help from many sources. These sources include civic organizations, other governmental programs, local service agencies for the blind, and—most important of all—the blind of Texas themselves.

Our approach over the years has been to seek consensus on matters of fundamental relevance to blind individuals, to the organizations speaking for blind individuals, and to the organizations serving blind individuals. We tend to defer action on issues which are inclined to be more principled than practical in their importance, and to hold in abeyance action on matters about which adequate agreement has not been achieved among most main parties of interest. On matters of obvious importance and upon which general agreement exists, we try to move forward rather rapidly and decisively. In this manner, gains have systematically and incrementally been made for everyone concerned. Conflict has been minimized, thereby allowing resources to be invested for useful and constructive purposes. Flexibility exists and compromises are from time to time made. The only nonnegotiable principle we have is the proposition that among reasonable individuals, nothing is nonnegotiable.

From time to time, representatives of various organizations of interest—including myself and other representatives of the Texas Commission for the Blind—find ourselves cooperating in the development and execution of certain proposals with considerable reservation. But, in the interest of accomplishing practical results and maintaining the harmony required to assure that those gains exert a maximally beneficial

impact upon the lives of the people for whose benefit all of this is done, there is this tendency to work together and to cooperate even when reservations about a particular course of action must sometimes be first expressed.

During the years I have been involved in this work it has been my privilege to occupy various positions of honor and trust in this field. I have never actively sought any position of leadership, including the position I currently hold with the Texas Commission for the Blind, and I am not, at my initiative, a candidate for any leadership position at this time.

But I have from time to time been asked to serve in various capacities, and I have on occasion agreed to make whatever contribution I might be capable of making. I have been careful to accept no position which might require an abandonment of any principles I value highly, but I have been equally scrupulous to avoid compromising the integrity of any organization with which I am affiliated in order to advance my own views and predilections.

Where I have accepted any position involving leadership responsibility, it has been my purpose to leave the organization involved a little stronger, a bit more effective, and somewhat more stable than it was before I assumed any responsibilities. This, and only this, will be my sole purpose with respect to any assignments I might undertake in the future.

To the extent that I have been able to accomplish my purpose in Texas or elsewhere, several things have been of major importance: consensus and harmony among parties of interest; priority upon pragmatic matters; reaching for the attainable; and

concerted effort among those who should be united in all instances but who all too frequently are not. It has been my approach to strive for these things in the past and it will be my goal to strive for these things in the future.

And in so doing, I do not propose to allow a dysfunctional donnybrook such as that in which the accreditation movement is presently involved to get in my way in any form or manner. It has been my practice to try to help resolve, whenever possible,

extraneous conflict which may impinge upon my effort in behalf of matters of substantive programmatic importance. When, however, it becomes apparent that efforts at conciliation would be futile because of the unalterable determination of the battling parties to carry the struggle to the death, I have and shall continue to confine my own involvement—and the involvement of any organization with which I might be associated—to assuring that flowers be sent and condolences extended at the appropriate time. □

#### NFB TEACHERS DIVISION MEETING

BY

ROBERT ACOSTA

The Teachers Division of the National Federation of the Blind held its fifth annual meeting at the site of the Convention of the National Federation of the Blind at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois. Our keynote speaker was Mr. Bob Herman, the Deputy Director of the Bureau for Handicapped Children of the Office of Education, Washington, D.C. Mr. Herman, representing his chief, Dr. Edwin Martin, spoke to the organization on the rights of handicapped children with special emphasis on the "blind child." In the question period, members of the Teachers Division expressed their concern that the concept of "mainstreaming" handicapped children into the regular public school community might lead to less support services to the blind child. Mr. Herman asserted that a large blind consumer organization like the National Federation of the Blind must be ever-vigilant to see that, in the name of integration, blind children were not shortchanged by special education programs which did not properly prepare the youngsters in the skill of Braille and other alternatives which could help

them to cope with their blindness.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Herman concluded by offering to put us on the mailing list for possible Federal grants from the Office of Education.

Mrs. Doris Willoughby and Ms. Bonnie O'Day spoke to us about the manner in which the Teachers Division could apply for Federal grants. Ms. O'Day discussed her efforts to obtain Federal funding for an orientation class for children ages six through ten which the NFB of Minnesota was attempting to establish as a possible summer course.

These two fine speakers left all of us much room for thought with respect to the obtaining of Federal funds for future projects of the Teachers Division. Bonnie O'Day cautioned us to take care that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare did not try to encumber any future project which we might wish to undertake with various qualifying clauses such as forcing us to include a psychologist in our program in order to assure its validity. She

concluded her remarks by stating that due to this kind of bias on the part of the officials of HEW she was turning to private foundations for the funding of the Minnesota project. The Teachers Division pledged its commitment to assist our colleagues in Minnesota with this truly innovative orientation class for blind children.

The newly elected officers of the Teachers Division who will serve for a two-year term are: president, Mr. Robert Acosta from California; first vice-president, Miss Judy Miller of Colorado; second vice-president, Mrs. Patricia Maurer of Indiana; secretary, Mr. Alex Chavich of New York; and the newly elected treasurer is Mr. Allen Schaefer of Illinois. Almost immediately, the board began to make plans for the upcoming year.

Our final speaker was Mr. Robert Keating who successfully led us to a victory in the Denver lawsuit better known as the Judy Miller case. As *Monitor* readers will remember, Judy Miller taught for two years in a suburb just outside of Denver. When her district was incorporated into the Denver School System, Judy immediately applied to the Denver Public Schools for a teaching position. She was turned down because she could not meet the rigid visual acuity

standards of the district. Believing that this was a clear case of discrimination against blind teachers, the NFB of Colorado, the NFB Teachers Division, and the National Federation of the Blind took court action against the Denver Public Schools. Four days before the trial was to begin, the attorneys representing the district capitulated and agreed to honestly try to recruit well-qualified teachers who happen to be blind. They also agreed to work very closely with the NFB Student Division and the NFB Teachers Division in order to accomplish this. We must at this time commend Judy Miller for displaying great courage in this long struggle. The blind teachers of this Nation owe a great debt to Judy and to the fifty thousand men and women who make up the National Federation of the Blind.

Our meeting was concluded with those present dividing up into a number of workshops which covered particular teaching areas. All of us went away from this event with renewed fervor and dedication which could lead us to even a greater year in the future. Certainly, we all look forward to seeing each other at our sixth annual meeting in July of 1976 in Los Angeles, California. □

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION COMMITTEE MEETS

BY

MICHAEL HINGSON

The NFB Research and Evaluation Committee meets during the NFB Convention each year to review advances in technology which concern the blind. This year, over one hundred Federationists gathered to hear from various research groups, as well as from companies which are already producing equipment used by blind persons.

The meeting began with a description of the Amana microwave oven which has been equipped with brailled controls. The Amana representative emphasized the fact that the oven was one of the standard units sold to the general public. However, any blind person who wished the so-called Braille version merely need purchase an extra set of dials embossed with Braille markings. It was refreshing to see a large manufacturer of kitchen products take an interest in what is certainly a relatively small market. The modified Amana microwave oven is a concrete demonstration of the ease and low cost of modifying equipment for use by blind persons.

During the remainder of the evening, many reports were given concerning the various types of Braille and talking calculators which now suddenly seem to be creeping up around the country.

The first to be heard from was Apollo Laser, which is the U.S. distributor of a talking calculator which is manufactured in Switzerland. The calculator, which sells for about \$1800 is designed to be used in business and office environments. The calculator's output is a rather high-pitched voice which gives the answer to whatever computation is requested by the user.

Another report on a talking calculator was given by Mr. Roger Tennison of Masters Specialty Corporation. That calculator is being marketed by them at a price of \$2500. Mr. Tennison explained that the high price was due mainly to the high cost of the memory which is utilized in creating the natural human speech output. The general feeling, according to Mr. Tennison, was that the calculator would be purchased by educational institutions and other agencies, rather than by individual consumers. Putting the price aside, the Masters Specialty talking calculator is a fine piece of machinery. It will perform the four basic arithmetic functions as well as a few other mathematical operations. In addition, the calculator has a complete set of memory functions. Finally, the calculator's audio output is all that it has been purported to be. It certainly sounds as human as any tape recorder or radio. Unlike the Swiss machine, the Masters Specialty's speech system can be used without any initial difficulty in comprehension.

According to Mr. Paul Obister of Telesensory Systems, Incorporated, TSI will soon have a talking calculator on the market. Details of the machine were sketchy but Mr. Obister did state that unlike its predecessors, the TSI device will be portable and will sell for something under \$500.

Discussions with Mr. Obister mainly centered around the Soniguide (radar glasses travel aid) which is now being distributed nationally by Telesensory Systems. The concern of all in attendance stemmed mainly from the lack of consumer

participation in the determination of the suitability of the device and in the development and implementation of the training program through which all purchasers of the Sonicguide must go. Though there was a distinct difference in the opinion of Mr. Obister and the members of the committee about TSI's attitudes toward consumer participation, those attending provided much input to Mr. Obister which, hopefully, will be communicated to the other members of the TSI staff.

The only calculator with a working Braille display was demonstrated by Mike Hingson. He explained that though a good Braille display was difficult to develop while keeping down the final consumer price, the task was not impossible. In fact, the final cost

of the calculator complete with Braille display will be between \$250 and \$350, depending on whether the user wants a calculator with just the four basic functions or whether a scientific calculator is desired.

Though this certainly seemed to be the year of the calculator, the committee had other concerns. The members felt that not only should they focus attention on new devices but should also begin evaluating those items which are already on the market. There was some discussion about how this would be done. It was obvious to all that there would be much work for the committee in the coming year which should make for an interesting report at next year's Research and Evaluation Committee meeting. □

#### NEW HORIZONS FOR DISCARDED AIDS FOR THE BLIND

In many countries throughout the world today, aids and appliances such as Braille watches, canes, Braille books and magazines, Braille writing equipment, and recorded books are not available to blind persons. Without these simple aids, the chances for blind persons in these countries to become independent and equal are made even more difficult. Very often the only way a blind person in these countries can get such aids is from donations of used materials from abroad. The Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee of the National Federation of the Blind is asking for your cooperation and help. The goals of our organization are to work for equality, security, and opportunity for blind persons. The CEIP Committee has been established specifically to work for these same goals for the blind in international matters. One of our projects is to collect and send overseas discarded aids and appliances. We want

to recycle outdated or unused materials into new productive uses. We need your help in locating items which can be sent to us for distribution overseas.

We are collecting items in five areas: (1) Braille books, magazines, and writing equipment; (2) Braille watches; (3) white canes; (4) tape recorders and tapes, reel-type or cassette; and (5) talking books, especially periodicals. Most of these items can be sent as free matter for the blind. We will repair any items if needed. The items we are collecting, and where they can be sent are given below. For your convenience also included are the postal regulations that need to be followed in sending this material. Even if you do not have items which you can send now, we would appreciate it if you could keep this information for future reference. We will take items at any time. Often we have found that minor technicalities

may stand in the way of your donating items, but just as often we have been able to find ways to overcome these minor problems. If you are willing to donate some items, please contact us and we can assist you in overcoming any difficulties in finding a way to do so, through accepted legal means.

We most certainly hope you will remember us the next time you clean out your cupboards and shelves. We will appreciate your efforts and so will thousands of blind persons throughout the world.

Specific items may be sent to the addresses given below. If you have large quantities of one item, and only one or two of the others, and it is more convenient for you, you may send all of the items to one address and our committee will handle them. We will repair items if necessary. If you have any questions, please contact us.

**BRAILLE BOOKS AND  
BRAILLE WRITING EQUIPMENT**

Raymond McGeorge  
901 East 17th Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80218

**BRAILLE WATCHES**

Bernice Hamer  
31 Dartmouth  
Lawrence, Massachusetts 01841

**TAPE RECORDERS AND TAPES  
OPEN-REEL OR CASSETTE**

Joanne Fernandes  
1210 Second Street  
Boone, Iowa 50036

**WHITE CANES**

Junerose Killian  
7 Chaplin Hill Court  
Niantic, Connecticut 06357

**TALKING BOOKS**

Colleen Spain  
309 Condley Drive  
Toledo, Ohio 43608

**Postal Regulations Regarding  
the Sending of These Items**

Braille books, Braille writing equipment, Braille watches, white canes, taped materials, and talking books can be sent as free matter for the blind. Sometimes tape recorders can be sent as free matter for the blind. When a tape recorder or tape player has been specially made or adapted for the blind, it may be sent as free matter. In most cases when an agency for the blind sends a recorder or player to a blind person, it is permitted to go as free matter for the blind. All of the addresses given above are those of blind persons.

The weight of packages being sent is a maximum of forty pounds. The size of the package may not exceed eighty-four inches when the length (the longest side) plus the girth are added together. The girth is found by measuring the total distance around the package at its narrowest point. If your body were a box, the length would be your height, and your waist would be the girth.

Especially in the case of items such as Braille watches and tape recorders, they should be well packed and wrapped to protect against damage. Containers will be returned if requested. Insurance on packages sent is optional.

We appreciate your help.

The International Postal Regulations relating to matter for the blind have been produced in Braille by the National Federation

of the Blind's Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee. Anyone who would like a Braille copy of these regulations may get one by sending his

name and address and fifty cents per copy to: Braille International Postal Regulations, Jana Sims, 5842 Walrond, Kansas City, Missouri 64130. □

## MONTANA CONVENTION

BY

LELIA M. PROCTOR

Members of the Montana Association for the Blind gathered in Bozeman the weekend of July 25-27 for the organization's 30th annual convention. For the first time two chapters co-hosted the convention—the Northwest Montana and the Missoula Chapters—and this arrangement seemed to work out very well.

During the opening ceremonies on Friday evening, Dr. Ray Weisenborn, Director of the Summer Quarter at Montana State University, welcomed us to the campus; President Charles Vanderzee gave his annual message, and Richard Peel, Regional Librarian for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, discussed library services in Montana and goals to be reached in providing more adequate services to library patrons. Anniversary cake, punch, and coffee were enjoyed later during the social hour.

On Saturday morning comprehensive reports were given on the recent NFB Convention by John and Susan Ford and Jim Aldrich. Susan Ford has been appointed to chair a committee on adoptive parents and Jim Aldrich is chairman of the newly formed ham radio operators committee.

We also heard from Dennis Lester, member of the State House of Representatives from Great Falls, who introduced our white cane legislation in the 1975 Legislature. He discussed the legislative process

and indicated when and how citizens can be most effective in making their wishes and opinions known to their representatives. Speakers during the afternoon session were Dick Edlund, Treasurer, National Federation of the Blind, and Ron Darcy, itinerant teacher for the State School for the Deaf and Blind in Great Falls.

Sprinkled throughout the convention were the various reports of MAB committees and programs. Two bylaw revisions were considered: one passing with little difficulty, the other going down to defeat after a lively debate. The membership report indicated that there were 187 members eligible to vote in the election that began one month prior to the convention. Since then another ten persons have joined our ranks. Legislative Chairman Harold Leigland reported on the activities of his committee during the year; Jim Sibert, Director of the Summer Orientation Program for the Blind, reported on the progress of the session to date; Susan Ford, MAB's Field Representative and Home Teacher, discussed her work in the past year. State Calendar Chairman Charles Vanderzee reported that gross receipts from the sale of 1975 calendars were \$9400. In regard to other fundraising efforts, the secretary-treasurer reported that White Cane drives brought in about \$1600, the letter campaign \$1700, and United Way contributions will come to about \$4350 in 1975. The Memorial Fund

report submitted by fund manager Hazel Stull indicated that the fund has grown by over \$1000 in the past year. All nine chapters gave reports on their activities during the year, and the Bozeman Chapter volunteered to host the 1976 MAB convention. Before adjourning Sunday noon, the convention voted contributions to *The Braille Monitor*, the Jacobus tenBroek Endowment Fund, the CEIP Committee, and *Good Cheer* magazine for the deaf-blind.

Approximately 110 persons were on hand for the Saturday night banquet which was emceed by Boyd Hirsch of Miles City. At this time a number of honorary membership certificates were awarded, the Association received a check for \$150 from the Bozeman Lions Club, Dick Peel was given the Dorothy C. Bridgman Award in recognition of his dedication to providing better library services to the blind of Montana; and Dick Edlund of the NFB was our guest

speaker. The day's activities ended with the traditional dance at the Eagles Lodge.

Election results were the first order of business on Sunday morning after the memorial service. The following officers were elected for two-year terms: president—James Sibert, Great Falls; first vice-president—Tony Persha (re-elected), Red Lodge; District One representative—John Ford, Missoula; District Four representative—Delos Kelley (re-elected), Billings. Hold-over board members are Virginia Sutich, second vice-president, from Sand Coulee; Charles Martin, District Two representative, from Livingston; and a vacancy is now created in District Three where Jim Sibert was representative.

All sessions were punctuated with frequent drawings for door prizes and there was much good fellowship throughout the weekend. Many voiced the opinion that this was the MAB's biggest and best convention yet. □

#### MISSOURI CONVENTION

BY

JANA SIMS

The 1975 convention of the National Federation of the Blind in Missouri proved one of the best held in several years. Over seventy-five members gathered at the Tiger Motel in Columbia, Missouri, on the weekend of April 25-27 for an active round of meetings, discussions, information, and fellowship.

The formation of a new chapter in the college town of Warrensburg got the convention off to a rousing start on Friday evening. The chapter began with eight members under the able leadership of a student, Gary Wunder. Gary helped to organize the Columbia Chapter in 1974.

Despite the efforts of the ACB affiliate in Missouri to destroy the Columbia Chapter of the NFB, as hosts to the 1975 convention, the Columbia Chapter showed itself very much alive. Although small in numbers, a beautiful job of convention organization was done by President Tom Stevens and the members. Their hard work and hospitality deserve many thanks.

After the committee and board meetings on Friday night, the whole membership got down to business on Saturday. Following the officers' reports, Dr. Don Eggeman of the University of Missouri (Columbia) gave an interesting talk on the opportunities and

problems for the blind student. During the discussion period some members and guests voiced concern over a center for blind and handicapped students at Missouri University's Columbia campus. They wondered if this center might not be an arbitrary and mandatory program raising problems similar to those faced by students in some other states where such centers exist. (Those readers of the *Blind Missourian* may recall an article on the Columbia center in the last issue.) This center was started in 1973-4 at the request of some blind students on the Columbia campus. Dr. Eggeman assured us that, although the program is controlled by the university, it only provides such services as the students request, and that no blind student is required to use any of the services offered.

Jim Omvig presented an informative and encouraging report from national headquarters. The membership was greatly pleased with the progress being made on so many fronts.

In the afternoon Charles Freeman, Chief, Services for the Blind, reported on the progress being made by the State during the past year. His report was augmented by comments from Roger Dinwiddie, an NFB member and employment specialist for Missouri Services for the Blind. Mr. John Brewer, on the vending stand program, explained some of the implications of the amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act for stand operators. The afternoon program concluded with committee reports and a speech by Mr. Bill Bland describing how he established and operates a successful collection agency. Mr. Bland gave an interesting account of problems he has faced as a blind person in this field and techniques he has used to carry on his business.

One of the highlights of the convention was the banquet and dance held on Saturday

evening. As usual, Jim Omvig gave an outstanding and stirring speech. The following awards were also presented: The Jacobus tenBroek Award for outstanding service by a sighted person went to Martha Kelly, wife of Jack Kelly, for her service and devotion to the work of the NFB; The Kenneth Jernigan Award for outstanding service or achievement by a blind person went to Rhoda Dower who has worked tirelessly in the NFB, and has worked with and counseled many newly blinded or young blind members; and a special Certificate of Merit to Mr. Jim Rolland, a counselor for the Springfield office of Services for the Blind, for his efforts in behalf of the blind.

Among the highpoints of the evening were appearances by Missouri Representative to Washington, James Symington, and an aide to Senator Thomas Eagleton. Congressman Symington seemed impressed with the NFB and told us he would support the Disability Insurance for the Blind bill. Senator Eagleton's aide assured us of Senator Eagleton's continuing support and interest.

Sunday morning's program featured a mini-seminar on how to work with the state legislators to achieve a solid legislative program for the blind. Dick Edlund and Jim Omvig told how their respective legislatures had been influenced by the NFB in their states to put through positive legislative programs for the blind and how bad projects had been stopped. Missouri State Senator Larry R. Marshall explained how we could work with Missouri legislators and told us about some of the rules for introducing legislation in the Missouri Legislature. The members also asked him about some legislation concerning the blind presently before the Legislature. He promised to look into it as it had not yet come before the Senate. As a result, in one case, he offered

an amendment to a bill renewing an advisory council on the handicapped to include a representative of the organized blind in the division of this body concerned with programs for the blind.

Although there were no major resolutions this year, the NFB in Missouri plans to attack the problem of gaining sound legislation for the blind with renewed vigor. The convention site for 1976 chosen is St. Louis, and members of the board were elected.

The officers for the next two years are as follows: president, John Dower of St. Louis; first vice-president, Tom Stevens of Columbia; second vice-president, Jack Kelly, Kansas City; corresponding secretary, Jana Sims, Kansas City; recording secretary, Margaret Bohley, St. Louis; treasurer, Ethel (Tiny) Beedle, Kansas City; first board member, Roger Dinwiddie, -Kansas City; second board member, Gary Wunder, Warrensburg; and board member representing Kirksville, Cheryl Lewis. □

#### NEW MEXICO CONVENTION

BY

STEVE SANDOVAL

The 1975 20th convention of the NFB of New Mexico was held at the campus of the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Convention activities commenced Friday evening, June 6, with a meeting of the resolutions committee. It was the largest crowd that ever assembled in an NFB convention in New Mexico. One of the convention highlights was that NMSVH Superintendent Jerry Watkins gave the group the red-carpet treatment from the beginning to the end.

The best highlight of the convention was having two great speakers at the banquet: Congressman Harold Runnels of New Mexico and the national NFB Treasurer, Richard Edlund of Kansas City. Congressman Runnels expressed hope for passage of H.R. 281 by the current session of Congress. This is his Disability Insurance for the Blind bill. He told the group that he will help us all he can for its passage. Richard Edlund spoke on the "Image of Blindness." He pointed out the image of the blind is changing slowly in the minds of the seeing

population. "With an opportunity to obtain jobs and become self-supporting, we can solve our own social problems," he stated.

Other activities of the convention included a talk about plans for future programs for services of the blind by Oliver Ortiz, Chief of Services for the Blind. Mr. John Maxson talked about what is taking place at the State's Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, and what he thinks newly blinded persons can expect to gain from attending the center. Mr. Sanchez expressed his views on sheltered shop management. Mr. Celso Chavez discussed amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act and the vending stand program in our State.

A complete report of the legislative activities was given by the legislative chairman, William Prince.

Richard Edlund, representing the National Office, gave a general report about the National Federation of the Blind and emphasized the importance of attending the national Convention. Superintendent

Jerry Watkins and his staff gave a report on the history of the New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped.

At the banquet on July 7, President Steve Sandoval presented a plaque to the Federationist-of-the-Year, Frutoso Garcia, rehabilitation counselor in Albuquerque, for his contribution to the program during the past year.

The highlight of the Sunday morning session was a report by Benjamin Wakashige, Librarian of the New Mexico Library for the Blind and Visually Handicapped.

Mr. Wakashige told the group that he would like to hear suggestions for improving their services to the blind. He has been librarian for only a year and already he has proven to be a great asset in serving the blind of New Mexico. He has spread their services throughout the State of New Mexico in various areas.

Richard Edlund was always at the right place at the right time. He gave us a report on how the tenBroek Endowment Fund works and what it is supposed to do. The convention adjourned at noon on Sunday, June 8. □

#### SOUTH CAROLINA CONVENTION

BY  
REBA B. HANCOCK

Charleston was the logical city to host the 1975 convention of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind, Inc., affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind, at the Francis Marion Hotel on August 15, 16, and 17. Few cities in the United States are more steeped in historic happenings than is Charleston, South Carolina. Although the South Carolina affiliate is thirty-one-years-old, our theme was the 20th anniversary of the Charleston Chapter. In fact, our first State convention was held in Charleston nineteen years ago.

Delegates from throughout our fair State began registering early Friday evening and before midnight over 150 persons had registered. A hospitality hour was enjoyed by all in attendance. The convention officially began on Saturday morning with a cordial welcome by the Mayor Pro-tem of Charleston, Alderman St. Julian Devine.

We were kept busy with legislative matters. As reported by NFB First Vice-President Donald Capps, a most exciting,

frustrating but successful piece of legislation was passed this year through the concentrated efforts of a dedicated statewide membership and an understanding Legislature. Legislative Chairman Donald Capps gave a most informative and knowledgeable report. We also had a most successful White Cane Week campaign of which the entire membership is justly proud and thankful.

A representative of the Charleston County branch of the South Carolina State Library gave a brief report of the library services available to the blind of the State.

The Charleston Chapter was host to a delightful luncheon. Mrs. Lula Mae Ehni of the Telephone Pioneers of Charleston, was presented a silver tray for her untiring service to the blind. In celebration of the Charleston Chapter's 20th year, a silver candy dish was presented to Mrs. Mildred Kirkland for her dedication and loyalty.

This convention had 200 registered persons including two visiting National

Board members—Mrs. Hazel Staley and Mr. Jonathan May—and several other out-of-state visitors.

Saturday afternoon was set aside for committee meetings and the playing of the National Press Club address by Dr. Kenneth Jernigan. The Saturday evening banquet was the highlight of the convention. After a superb meal, an updated fifteen-minute sound/slide documentary of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind was appreciated by the 225 persons in attendance. President Hancock introduced Marshall Tucker who presented the Donald C. Capps award to Mrs. Mattie Bell Gatlin of the Charleston Chapter for her outstanding service during the past year. Also introduced was Robert Oglesby of Spartanburg who presented the Dr. Samuel M. Lawton Memorial Scholarship award to Mrs. Sheilah Compton of Florence.

The Student Division surprised and pleased all by presenting Sheilah with an additional gift of \$100. President Hancock then introduced Jimmie Smith of Anderson to present the Ellen B. Mack Home Award to S. T. Gunter of Anderson.

The remainder of the festivities was turned over to Donald Capps, master of ceremonies, who had the unique pleasure to present the Aurora Service Award to Senator Hyman Rubin for the second time. This award is given annually to the sighted person who has rendered outstanding service to the blind of the State. To receive this honor twice was unprecedented but nonetheless deserved. Mr. Allan C. Mustard, longtime Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Aurora Center of the Blind and recently appointed to the Board of the S.C. Commission for the Blind, was then introduced. He commended us for our

untiring efforts and pledged his support. Mr. Mustard was recently elected Chairman of the Board of the S.C. Commission for the Blind. Mr. Capps introduced our guest speaker, Lieutenant Governor W. Brantley Harvey, Jr., who gave a most interesting and inspiring address. Several other South Carolina dignitaries were in attendance and were cordially welcomed.

The executive officers and board members held a brief breakfast business meeting early Sunday morning. The Sunday morning meeting began with a program of special music and a memorial service led by Marshall Tucker.

Commissioner Henry F. Watts and staff members Ed Robinson and Mrs. Patricia Harris of the S.C. Commission for the Blind, reported on new and innovative services to the blind: new directives and mobility and home teaching. President of the Student Division, Miss Susanne Bridges of Columbia, chaired a program on "Students on the Move."

Reports of all ten chapter presidents were given and several timely resolutions presented. Board members were elected as follows: Mrs. Lois B. Tucker and Miss Hilda Graham of Columbia, Odell Austin of Orangeburg, Robert Bell of Greenville, Herman Dunn of Anderson to fill the unexpired term of Mrs. Evelyn Easler, and John Otis Bosler of Greenwood to fill the unexpired term of G. M. Moore.

Superintendent of the S.C. School for the Blind, Mr. N. F. Walker, gave the convention a glowing report of the progress of the expansion program at the school. The new infirmary is nearing completion and the swimming pool will be ready soon.

During the convention donations were accepted on a chance to win afghans and

ceramic pieces in an effort to raise money to send members to the National Federation of the Blind Convention in Los Angeles next year and two items were auctioned. As this was explained to those present, a spontaneous burst of gifts of five dollars, tens, twenties, one hundreds, and even a two-hundred-dollar pledge began to pour in. All totaled, over \$1300 was given or pledged

in a few minutes, showing great enthusiasm and keen interest for a goodly number to attend the 1976 National Federation Convention. On this dedicated, happy, and enthusiastic spirit, the 19th annual convention, the largest meeting of the blind in the history of the State to date, was adjourned to meet again in Rock Hill at the Ramada Inn the weekend of August 13-15, 1976. □

#### MONITOR MINIATURES

Kenneth Tiede, energetic leader of the Johnson County Chapter of the NFB of Kansas, died very suddenly on August 11. The loss of this loyal Federationist will be felt across the country.

Though he served as president only a year-and-a-half, his belief in the movement and in the blind brought his chapter into full participation in the life of the Federation and in his community. He knew the value of communication and issued a monthly newsletter for his chapter—more than some of our state affiliates manage to do.

Ken Tiede had only been blind for about two years—the result of advancing diabetes. But his faith in the movement and his religious beliefs kept him on the barricades despite failing physical strength. He recently suffered kidney failure and was on a dialysis machine three days a week and had to use a walker. But these lacks did not slow him down. As his friend Jerry A. Dal Porto wrote about him, "Ken lived an abundant life. He was president of the NFB of Johnson County and served on the State Board of the NFB of Kansas. He worked on fundraising until the treasury was in the black. He helped with organizing the State convention and served as chairman of the

resolutions committee. He was working for the future generations of blind Americans...." Ken Tiede's funeral was attended by some of the leading figures in local and State politics. We salute him for the strength he gave and still gives to those he left to carry on his work. And all Federationists extend to his family our warm sympathy for the loss we have all suffered.

\* \* \* \* \*

On July 1, 1975, the basic SSI grant was increased as a result of the cost-of-living escalator clause, the grant for an individual increasing from \$146 a month to \$157.70 and couples from \$219 a month to \$236.60. A preliminary report shows that only five states show a full pass along of this increase; seven states made a limited pass along; five states provided for equal or higher increases; twenty-six states showed no pass along or increase; and six states had a limited increase. Two states were undecided.

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Still another discriminatory practice of our governmental system has stopped, at least in one state—Washington. This is the provision of law that has kept blind persons from sitting on juries. To be a juror hereto-

fore, a person must have been in full possession of his faculties and of sound mind. But the NFB of Washington spearheaded a change in this provision in the recent legislative session. Federation spokesmen showed lawmakers two blind men in Seattle who served as jurors in cases involving murder and rape. They also cited a case of another blind man who was denied his right for jury duty by the clerk of the court solely because he was blind, even though a college graduate and a successful businessman. The new law, passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Evans, provides that a person "shall not be precluded from the list of prospective jurors because of loss of sight in any degree."

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*Feeling Sports*, published by the Braille Sports Foundation, 8800 Highway 7, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55426, is written exclusively for the visually handicapped sport fan. It is a monthly magazine available in Braille or on 33-1/3 rpm talking book discs.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Patrick Comorato of 815 Ivy Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15232 writes: During the 35th annual Convention of the NFB in Chicago, we dog guide users formed a committee which is interested in formulating standards for dog guide schools. We believe that a set of standards should be developed by the consumers which would govern all dog guide schools. We have all decided to ask all dog guide schools affiliated with NAC to disaffiliate themselves from NAC. Therefore, we urge all dog guide users who have graduated from NAC-accredited schools to write to your schools urging them to disaffiliate them-

selves from NAC. We are interested in problems that you may be having. Please write to the chairman, Patrick Comorato.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Industrial Home for the Blind of Brooklyn, New York, has named Joseph J. Larkin as executive director. Larkin joined the Sales Department of the Home after completing his service in the Navy following World War II. In 1972, after several promotions, Larkin became business manager.

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More than 23.5 million people covered by Medicare have received a new edition of "Your Medicare Handbook." The handbook was also sent to doctors, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and health insurance organizations which handle Medicare claims. It is the first major revision since 1968 and is available free at any Social Security office.

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The *Newsletter*, publication of the NFB of Virginia, states that Virginia's Attorney General has supported the White Cane Law in a decision recently handed down. The decision dealt with the complaint that a blind man had been denied the chance to ride on a ride during the 1974 Virginia State Fair. The Attorney General held that if any person can ride, then a blind person can also.

\* \* \* \* \*

According to HEW figures, the total number of public welfare employees in either full- or part-time capacity in 1973

was 241,000. This increase is due in part to the rapid rise in the AFDC and ATD case-loads and especially in Medicaid.

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According to *Performance*, publication of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, one out of every eleven adult Americans is disabled. Fifty-two percent of these disabled adults have incomes of less than \$2,000 a year. Sixty percent never finished high school. The lowest official poverty level—the poorest of the poor—has a proportion of handicapped people that is twice as high as the non-disabled population. In a newly released publication, the President's Committee examines this census study, nationally and state by state. Analyzing the samplings in terms of sex, age, education, income, poverty status, and labor force status, the committee has made comparisons between the handicapped population and the non-disabled population. What has been found is not very reassuring to disabled citizens. Single copies of "One in Eleven" are available without cost from the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Washington, D.C. 20210.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Federal Court has ordered the U.S. Civil Service Commission to include the problem of discrimination against Federal employees with physical handicaps in its equal employment opportunity program. In a sweeping decision, the court enjoined the commission from pursuing its former policy and from refusing to give relief to employees with physical handicaps. This decision certainly means a better break for those Federal men and women with

handicaps whose disabilities have made them victims of discrimination.

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Volunteer Services for the Blind, 919 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107, produces the Braille abridged edition of *Chess Life & Review*. The cost is \$15 per year for a twelve-month subscription.

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The Cultural Exchange and International Program Committee of the National Federation of the Blind is in the process of establishing a cooperative working relationship with Rotary International, a worldwide service club organization headquartered in Evanston, Illinois. For this purpose, we need to hear from any Federationist who is also currently an active member of Rotary International. Please contact Rami Rabby, 535 North Michigan Avenue, Apt. 304, Chicago, Illinois 60611, Telephone: (312) 467-1620.

\* \* \* \* \*

Have you ever wanted to act? Here's your chance—The Elbee Audio Players now opens its 14th season of dramatic reading productions. They invite blind men and women living in the New York City area to join them in an active season of good drama in congenial company. Elbee uses no sets or costumes. Like radio dramas, their productions are meant to be heard instead of seen. Requirements: good, clear diction; must be a competent Braille reader; should be able to travel independently; should have strong interest in the theater and what it means. No dramatic experience necessary. Rehearsals: one evening a week. Performances: about twenty a season (from October

to June). Elbee is a mobile drama troupe, bringing the theater to the community. This is a highly stimulating avocation for all who participate. If interested, call David Swerdlow, Director, TRafalgar 4-5704.

### Chapters Report Elections

On June 19, 1975, new officers of the Jackson Federation Chapter of the NFB of Michigan were elected as follows: president, Marvin Hewitt; first vice-president, Jim Walker; second vice-president, Alice Koebbe; recording secretary, Judy Franklin; and treasurer, Edward Konieczki.

The newest chapter to join the ranks of the NFB of Kentucky is the Kentucky Association of State Workers of the Blind, Inc., formed late in April. Chapter membership comes from the ranks of those currently employed in work with the blind or from those who have had at least one year's experience in the field. The chapter was formed to give professional workers with the blind in Kentucky an arena for the discussion of mutual problems and concerns. It will also serve as a springboard for the launching of programs of public education. The Kentucky Association of State Workers of the Blind believe the public needs to become more aware of and more directly involved in programs of and for the blind. The KASWB officers are: president, Fred Gissoni; vice-president, H.D. Wilson; secretary-treasurer, Cathy Taylor; membership director, Betty J. Niceley; public relations director, Joan Page.

The 1975-1976 officers of the Louisville Association of the Blind are as follows: president, Dennis R. Franklin; first vice-president, Margaret Bourne; second vice-president, Enoch Harned; third vice-president, James Rader; recording secretary,

Mary Beaven; corresponding secretary, Carla Lake; and treasurer, Betty Jackson.

The new president of the Greenwood Chapter of the South Carolina Aurora Club of the Blind is Miss Despo Zouras.

Claire Oliver, secretary of the Nashoba Valley Chapter, NFB of Massachusetts, writes: At our June meeting we held our annual election of officers for the year 1975-1976. The results were: Philip N. Oliver, president; Carol A. Uphold, vice-president; Claire E. Oliver, secretary; and Barbara E. Brookings, treasurer. Our past president is Richard Wood and State Delegate Elizabeth Wood is serving her second year of a two-year term. The chapter is looking forward to a prosperous and productive third year as the local chapter of the NFB of Massachusetts.

The Greater Lawrence Association of the Blind, an affiliate of the NFB of Massachusetts, held its annual election of officers for the term beginning July 1, 1975, and ending June 30, 1976. Alfred L. Bonanno was chosen president; Peter Cote, vice-president; Paul Lasonde, treasurer; Donna Atwood, corresponding secretary; Josephine Benoit, recording secretary; Lillian Bonanno, financial secretary; and Shaban Numan, sergeant-at-arms. Maria Sapienza was elected to a three-year term as trustee.

The recently reorganized Brooklyn Chapter, NFB of New York State, held elections early in August with the following results: Albert Cutolo, president; Rosario Mazzella, first vice-president; Edna Oliver, second vice-president; Edward Kashdan, secretary; and F. Andrew Werner, treasurer.

The newly elected officers of the National Federation of the Blind of Vanderburgh

County (Evansville, Indiana) are: Ellis Scott, president; Mary Hoppenstedt, vice-president; Roy Chumley, second vice-president; Bettye Baysinger, secretary; Jean Wagner, associate secretary; and Marie Scott, treasurer.

On August 14, 1975, the **National Federation of the Blind of Tippecanoe County** became the newest local chapter in Indiana. Organized partly with the help and dedication of persons who had been members of the NFB throughout the State of Indiana, this new chapter has twenty-three fine Federationists as members. The new president is Janel Hudelson, a longtime member of the Federation and a leader. Ms. Earlene

Hughes is the vice-president and a student at Purdue University. The secretary is Pat Deinhart who is active in the community action and service programs. Larry Sorenson, the treasurer, is a piano tuner with his own business. The new chapter has a set of officers which is likely to make it one of the biggest and best in the State.

June 1975 elections in the **Kern County Chapter, NFB of California**, resulted as follows: president, Irene E. Smith; vice-president, Santa Bannister; treasurer, Fay Manning; secretary, Flossie Cate; board members at large are Rick Lewis and Vern Sweitzler. □



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